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AS THEY STEERED CLOSER IN SHORE JACK CAME UP AND ASSISTED THEM TO LAND.

NORA'S LOVE DREAM.

[A NOVELETTE.]

CHAPTER I.

"WHAT do you think, Jack?" Adah Dornton, a slight, rather tall girl of about seven or eight-and-twenty, with a mass of fair hair surmounted by a small lace cap, meant to give a matronly air to her pretty face, raised her eyes, deeply blue, to her husband's dark face as she finished reading her letter.

"I am waiting," he said, smiling across at her over the high glass of flowers.

"Guess who is coming to our garden-party?" she replied, with a roguish nod.

"My dear Adah, I was never good at guessing riddles," and Jack tried to look interested.

"Nora Alington, my old schoolfellow. Why Jack, I never knew you to be so careless!"

As his wife pronounced the name of her intended guest a grey pallor overspread the dark, swarthy, though rather handsome face of

John Dornton, and the delicate Sèvres cup he was holding fell to the ground shivering to a hundred fragments.

"Never mind, pet," he returned, in a husky voice, as he rose and went to the fireplace, where he leant with his back turned to his newly-wedded bride.

John Dornton and Adah Somerville had met in a little seaside town far removed from the bustle and turmoil of the London world, and after a few months' courtship they married and settled down in a suburb of London.

The garden-party Adah spoke of was their first gathering of friends since their marriage, and to her great delight her old schoolfellow, whom she had not seen for two years, had accepted her invitation.

"But, Jack, do you know that cup is one of the set that belonged to your mother!" said his wife, trying in her love for him to hide the truth—that she guessed something had upset him. If it were anything he wished her to know he would tell her; so she argued, little dreaming what passionate sorrow filled his heart—what wild passion racked that apparently quiet form.

"I must be off now," he observed, presently, taking out his watch, although there was a tiny marble clock on the mantel-piece. "It is past ten, and I am due at eleven. I shall be late."

Adah Dornton followed him out into the wide, cool hall, and stood quietly by his side. Her heart was too full for words. Never in the whole six months of their married life had she seen such a cloud on his brow; and then, to crown her misery, he passed under the portico and down the glistening grass-bordered path without having bestowed his usual morning kiss upon her fresh young cheek. But as he unfastened the low, brown wooden gate he glanced back, and caught sight of the wistful blue eyes and sad, paling face.

"My little wife," he cried, coming to her side and taking the rounded form in his strong arms, "how cruel and unkind you must think me! I was actually going away without my kiss!"

The bright colour came back to the fair face, and swift, pretty smiles chased each other across the sensitive features till, as he passed round the corner of the country road, her face was radiant as the summer morn, and she went back to her

household duties with the old, happy feeling in her loving young heart.

When Jack came home that evening the cloud had vanished, and his manner was, if possible, more tender than usual, and he laughed, and talked, being apparently in wonderful spirits. But what was the secret that made his young face look so grave as he stood in his dressing-room that night?

The next week passed away, and nothing happened to dim the bright sunshine that illumined their home; and so the Tuesday arrived on which Nora Alginstone had promised to be with them.

"You will be back early, Jack?" said his wife, as she stood at the garden gate, the sun streaming down upon her fair head and turning the thick masses of fluffy hair to threads of gold.

"I shall be back at seven," he replied. "What time is your friend coming?"

"Five o'clock, she says. I am going to the station to meet her. Good-bye, Jack!"

He glanced back several times with a bright smile on his lips. There was no smile in those dark eyes; but this she could not see from that distance, and so she went about the garden and into the large conservatory gathering bunches of sweet-smelling flowers to adorn their luxurious home with, and singing little snatches of his favourite songs in her clear-bell-like tones.

She was at the little railway-station at a quarter to five, and the platform was crowded. Not a few turned to gaze after the slight, graceful figure clad in pale blue that set off the exquisite fairness of her complexion; but Adah was not vain, and the admiring looks of the people did not attract her attention in the least. If she thought of it at all it was to smile with pleasure that her dress was pretty; for Jack had never seen it yet, and she wished him to approve her taste.

The train was late, and Adah was beginning to feel a little impatient, when the shrill whistle of the engine sounded through the tunnel, and in another moment the little station was in a state of confusion and bustle.

She tried to make her way through the crowd of people, but finding this impossible she returned to the waiting-room, where Nora would be sure to come in search of her.

Presently a small figure, clad in sober brown, entered the waiting-room, and seeing Adah at the further end, ran forward with a quick, pleased exclamation, throwing up her veil as she did so and disclosing a pretty vivacious face lit by a pair of large, bright, hazel eyes, and framed in a mass of curly brown hair.

"Adah!" she cried, in a glad, fresh girlish voice, "I really thought for a moment that you were not here. Was it not horrid of me?"

"Horrid, no!" laughed Adah. "But, Nora, you have not grown a bit; I am still a head taller than you."

And so chatting and laughing in a merry, light-hearted way, the two girls left the station, walking briskly home in the cool evening air.

"What a fairy-bower!" exclaimed Nora, as they stopped at the garden gate. "And this is your home, Adah! You are a lucky woman!"

Nora's usually glad tones trembled slightly, and a suspicious dimness came over the clear eyes; but Adah did not notice these signs of agitation, and she replied, with a pretty blush,—"I am happy, Nora—perfectly happy; for my husband loves me."

"What time is Mr. Dornon coming home, Adah?" asked Nora.

She had washed the travel-stains from her face and hands, and changed the brown dress for a pale silver grey, with delicate pink bows at the throat and down the front, and the two friends were seated in the drawing-room—a perfect gem in its luxurious appointments—awaiting Jack's return.

"Seven, precisely. He is never late," replied the young wife, a little proudly, for she liked to show her old schoolfellow how she was loved.

"Do you know, Adah, that I once knew a —" began Nora, and then stopped short,

while a rich tide of crimson stained her pretty face, receding next moment to leave it pale as death.

She had risen while her hostess was speaking; and happening to see an album on the table beside her, had carelessly opened it, the first photograph that met her gaze caused her to start, and closing the album hurriedly she sat down again.

"How silent you are, Norrie!" cried Adah, laying her white hand on her friend's lap; "it used not be so in the old days. Do you remember Madame giving you a hundred lines because you would speak when you were told to be silent? But you were going to tell me — Why, what is the matter?—are you ill? You look like a ghost," and Adah pulled the bell sharply.

"It is nothing, Adah. Seeing you has recalled the dear past, when—when my father and mother were with me, and—"

"Bring me the carafe of water from the next room," said Adah, as she went to the side-table and took up a decanter of wine, "Miss Alginstone is not well," and the servant who answered the ring disappeared, reappearing the next moment with the water.

"Really, Adah!" protested Nora, as she handed her a tumbler of claret and water.

"Drink it up. I will not listen to another word until it is gone," insisted Adah. "There, now you have quite a colour, Bark!" she added, with a glad, quick blush; "that is Jack's footstep," and away she flew to meet him.

Nora rose from her chair with a slight hesitation in her movements; and when, a few minutes later, Adah entered with her husband she was standing there in the centre of the long room with a look of startled expectancy in her hazel eyes, and her small hands tightly clenched.

"So this is your little friend!" said Jack, in a low restrained voice, holding out his hand to the girl, who stared at him as though he were a visitor from another world. "Welcome to our home, Miss Alginstone!"

"How dreadfully altered Norrie seems!" thought Adah, as the girl murmured some indistinct words, then relapsed into silence. "She used to be so self-possessed, and now she is worse than a school girl."

But after a little time Nora Alginstone joined in the conversation, for Adah would keep referring to her, and she felt that her friend would think her ungracious if she sat there answering in monosyllables; and so, when dinner was announced, they were all more at their ease, though Jack, who was usually so full of spirits, was a little preoccupied.

"When is this garden festival going to take place?" asked Jack, pinching his wife's ear as they stood on the lawn in the evening hush, after dinner.

"In two days' time, you wicked boy; I have answered that question a dozen times at least," replied the girl—for she was but a girl—with a little pout.

"Your pardon, madame; my memory is very short," he replied, with mock politeness.

Adah did not make any reply, and they stood there in perfect silence, watching the twilight fade away, and the stars come out one by one in the high clear sky.

There was a pleasant hum of night insects in the air, and every now and again the sound of bright, joyous laughter, or a woman's voice ringing out soft and clear, as some boating party passed along the river, came to their ears.

"Nora, I shall keep you hard at work to-morrow," said Adah, rather abruptly, as she placed her hand on her friend's shoulder and gazed steadily into the sweet face which had changed so since she last saw her. "You must brighten up for the garden party," she added, and Nora gave a little laugh.

"Why, Adah, do you expect me to be as mischievous as when I was at school?" she cried.

"I should not object. I do not like to see you so silent, for it is so unusual."

"You see Adah only invited you here on

account of your wonderful flow of spirits, and she is naturally disappointed. She thought you would make her garden party a success," observed Jack, gazing up at the sky as though absorbed in thought.

"Jack, I declare you are incorrigible. You know that I asked her because I wished to see her again, and for no other reason."

"Wife, if I may be allowed to make a suggestion," said Jack, presently glancing at Nora, who was standing by a tall rose-bush with a strange tense expression on her small features, "we had better go indoors if we are not desirous of going off into a rapid consumption."

"It has turned quite chilly," declared Adah, with a little shrug of her shapely shoulders. "Come, Nora, and give us a treat. You know what I mean."

And so, when they went into the drawing-room Nora sat down at the piano and played for them some dreamy, tender pieces that somehow impressed her hearers with the idea that her thoughts were far away—some spirited, and with a certain reckless dash that told of a strong will beneath that childlike exterior.

That night, when Nora found herself in her room alone, she did not immediately disrobe, as Adah had laughingly ordered; she went to the lace-draped casement and drew aside the curtains, and stood gazing out with sad eyes at the spacious grounds in which the house was situated.

"Why does he ignore that episode!" she murmured, and a tear slowly coursed down her pale cheeks. "Is it so easy to forget! I wish I could!" and a sigh broke from the parted lips.

The moon rose higher and higher in the deep blue heavens, and still that small quiet form stood at the window with pale, tearful face, and now with clasped hands. The chiming of a distant clock aroused her from her painful reverie, and she turned away after drawing the curtains together.

Next morning Adah came down rather late, but she found her husband and Nora already in the cheerful cool chintz-furnished breakfast-room. Nora was standing at the window, a tiny figure in pale pink, and Jack was deep in the perusal of his newspaper, when she entered, yet she could have declared that she heard voices as she came along the wide hall.

"I thought I heard you two talking," she said, with a bright smile up into her husband's face, "and instead you are behaving like an engaged couple who have quarrelled. I am surprised at you, Jack!"

"Oh, do not scold him, Adah," cried Nora, merrily, while Jack flushed and bit his lips. "I told him not to stand upon ceremony with me."

"Very well, dear, if you don't mind!" and with these words Adah sat down and commenced pouring out the coffee with quite a little matronly air.

"You will not be dull to-day, wife," said Jack as he bade her good-bye that morning. "I am glad Nora has come."

These words were accompanied with an almost tender glance at Nora Alginstone's averted face, and an uncomfortable wordless feeling crept into the young wife's heart. Nora, too! How naturally he called her by her Christian name!

"I am never dull, Jack," she replied; "but I am glad, very glad, to have dear old Norrie with me."

She followed him out of the room as she spoke, and standing at the open door again watched him turn the corner; and the memory of the loving light in his eyes as he bade her good-bye banished that nameless feeling from her heart.

"How he loves you!" said Nora, who had come out into the hall on hearing Jack say good-bye.

She came to the door, through which such an inviting glimpse could be seen of the tall trees opposite, standing motionless in the sultry morning air, and of beautifully laid-out grounds and undulating grass-land beyond, and, in the distance, a silvery something that must be water.

"Why do you always sigh when you speak of his love for me?" asked her friend, while a



thought flashed through her mind that perhaps Nora had had a false lover. Nora was not one to make a parade of her feelings, therefore she would not have heard of it if such were the case.

"Because now I have no one to care for me, I am rich, truly, but money is not everything, though there are so many who think otherwise. I would give all my wealth for—"

She broke off abruptly in the midst of her passionate speech, for Adah was staring at her in surprise, and well she might.

The slight *petite* form seemed to dilate and grow taller with the girl's emotion, and the great hazel eyes were aglow with intense feeling.

"Come, dear," said Adah gently. It was as she suspected. Poor Nora! She could appreciate the girl's agitation—she thought, as she drew her slender hand through her arm and led the way back to the breakfast-room.

"What are we going to do first?"

It was Nora who spoke, and her tones had regained their old girlish light-heartedness.

"Don't you think we had better put on our things and order those sweetmeats at once? They will never be sent in time," replied Adah, looking a little anxious. "I cannot imagine how I could have been so stupid as to forget them."

"Oh, I daresay we can manage to carry them home," responded Nora, and Adah gave a sigh of relief.

"So we can."

Away they went upstairs, and in a very short space of time the two were walking leisurely along the road that led to the town.

The sun shone brightly, and the sleepy chirp of birds and the drowsy hum of insects filled the air. It was a perfect day, and Nora's pretty face had not a sign of a cloud upon it when they arrived at their destination.

When they returned home there was plenty to do, and the rest of the day was spent in preparations for the morrow, the two girls laughing and chattering about the guests that were expected.

Jack came home at his usual hour, and that evening passed away as the previous one, with the exception that, after dinner, instead of having any music, they went for a walk across the moon-lit fields.

The next day dawned, the morning of the garden-party, fair, but with a slight misty haze over the awakening earth that told of a sultry day.

"I am so glad, dear," said Nora, turning from her contemplation of the *marquee* that had been erected on the lawn, as Adah Dornton entered the breakfast-room, which she had left to give some directions to the cook. "We shall have a lovely day."

"Yes, and I not lucky!" she replied, with a radiant smile, coming to her friend's side and putting her arm round her small form.

"Very lucky; it is not every woman who has such a husband!" cried a saucy, manly voice, and Jack drew his wife's happy face on to his breast.

Nora's back was turned so she could not see the hasty caress.

"Pardon me, Mr. Dornton" (how quickly she always pronounced that name), "but I fancy the luck is on the other side."

"Well, I will not contradict so fair a specimen of the opposite sex," he replied, as he seated himself at the daintily spread table.

After the meal was finished Jack went to his own apartment, a cosy apartment, which was neither smoking-room, nor study, nor sitting-room, but a snug mixture of all three, leaving his wife and Nora to see to the final arrangements; and by the time the luncheon bell sounded they were completed, and Nora and Adah were sitting with bright smiling faces in the dining-room when Jack came down.

At half-past three Adah was standing on the lawn, tall and slender, and golden-haired, clad in pale green silk and priceless lace, and the sun shining down so brightly could find no flaw in that perfect face.

Nora was beside her, looking like a little wood nymph in her deep rose-pink silk gauze and dainty ribbons.

A flush was on her piquant face as she chatted

vivaciously to a group of ladies and gentlemen who had just arrived.

Soon the lawn was crowded with visitors, and through the trees the gay dresses of the young girls could be seen as they wandered with their cavaliers among the flowers, while their elders seated themselves and conversed confidentially with one another as they sipped lemonade or iced sherry.

The party was a success. There could be no doubt of that; and Adah turned with a happy smile on her face to Lady Ladbroke as that lady touched her on the arm with her fringed fan.

"Who is that young lady dressed in rose gauze? That little thing with such exceedingly beautiful eyes!" she asked, indicating, with a slight inclination of her head, a spot some little distance from them where Jack and Nora were standing engaged in earnest conversation.

"That is Nora Alginstone, my old school-fellow. She is very pretty, I think," replied Adah, looking pleased at the compliment paid to her friend.

"Ah! and she is staying with you?" murmured Lady Ladbroke, with a significant nod. "Take care, take care, my dear," continued the mischief-maker.

Something required Adah's attention at that moment, and when she again found herself at leisure Jack and Nora were nowhere to be seen.

Hubert Huntley, one of her guests, came up to her just then with a smile and a bow, asking her to show him some flowers his mother had been praising, and she smilingly laid her grey-gloved hand on his arm and led the way down a by-path bordered by poplars, and between one of the gaps, as she walked with a society smile on her face, and society small-talk on her lips, she saw her husband standing beside Nora—he with a tender, anxious light in his dark eyes, she with upraised eyes and small clasped hands.

As Hubert turned to her with the remark, "They are glorious"—they had reached the conservatory by this time, and through the open door could be seen a mass of rare exotics—she saw Jack raise Nora's hand and press it between both his own, while a crimson flush of pleasure overspread the girlish features.

"Yes, are they not lovely?" she remarked, calmly, as they entered the hothouse.

Her heart was beating madly at the scene she had just witnessed, and the scent of the many flowers made her feel quite faint.

Lady Ladbroke's mysterious nods and glances came back to the young wife with unpleasant distinctness. How cruel, how unkind of Jack to make her the object of tea-table gossip, for of course the old mischief-lover would improve upon his flirtation with Nora!

A proud smile rested on Adah's lips as she turned with her companion and retraced her steps.

She would show all there that she saw no harm in her husband making himself agreeable to their visitor; and so, when they came out of the shade of the tall, straight poplars on to the lawn which was strewn with the delicate, pale blossoms of the laburnum that fringed one side, she went up to Jack and made some smiling remark, at the same time placing her hand on his arm.

"How can she be so blind?" was Lady Ladbroke's malicious remark as she beheld this, and the person addressed pulled his long, grey moustache and muttered under his breath,—
"Sensible little woman that!"

When the sun began to decline, and the high blue sky was flecked with tiny, feathery, rose-tinted clouds, and the song of the birds had sunk into a dreamy murmur, and the many gaudily-coloured butterflies had ceased their aerial wanderings, the guests began to disperse, and as the last tinge of pink faded in the west Adah and her husband stood alone on the rich, green lawn. Nora had gone indoors.

But Adah spoke no word of reproach; she would not condemn him for this alone. She must have other evidence that he was false ere she accused him; and so, when in the shelter of a tall but bushy monthly rose-tree he took her in his arms and pressed a tender kiss of love on her lips

she put her white arm round his neck and returned the caress.

Then Nora came out into the garden again, and the three went down to the water's edge—the river flowed at the end of their grounds—and Jack untied the boat from the boat-house door, and they went for a row in the sweet eventide, and Nora sang in her rich, soft voice as they floated along in the calm, still twilight.

CHAPTER II.

"I SHALL not be home until eight o'clock, wife, so you had better not wait dinner," said Jack, some few days later as he rose from the breakfast-table.

"Why, Jack? I hope you are not working too hard," she replied, with a quick look of anxiety into his face. "You look quite pale this morning!"

"Oh, I have not recovered from the garden party yet," he laughed; but that laugh did not deceive Adah. There must be some cause for his white, tired-looking face and haggard eyes. Still she did not press the subject, for Jack was very reserved, and did not like being questioned.

When they were first married she had asked, naturally enough, a few simple questions about his family, and he had replied, almost sternly,—

"I am rich, Adah; you can have everything you desire. What more can you wish for?"

And she had never spoken on the subject again. She did not know if he had a father or mother living. But they had been very happy; until now not a single cloud had arisen between them, and now was not the cloud of her own making? After all, was there anything so very dreadful in what she had seen?

It was Lady Ladbroke's spiteful remarks that had rankled in her mind, and made her see everything through a magnifying glass.

Nora was very silent and preoccupied all that day; and there was a strange air of repressed excitement about her that struck her friend with a feeling of uneasiness; but the afternoon faded into evening, and the evening into night, without anything unusual occurring, so she decided that Nora was still brooding over that past love.

"Don't you think you had better go to bed early, dear?" said Jack, looking at the clock, and laying his hand caressingly on the golden head. "It is ten now, and I am going to stay up late. I must finish those papers to-night."

"You need not look so terribly in earnest over it, Jack," observed Adah; "but I think it very foolish."

"Adah!" he cried, almost fiercely; "will you not do anything I ask you?"

His wife stared at him in surprise. What did he mean?

"Surely you are not alluding to my going to bed early," she said, slowly, as though she felt there was some mystery which she could not grasp. "How strangely you speak, Jack!"

"I know I do, pet; but you must forgive me; I have been working very hard lately, but it will be all over next week," and he heaved a deep sigh of relief, and wiped his brow, which had become quite moist.

Nora Alginstone, who had been a silent witness of this scene, started and paled as the last words fell upon her ear; and she clasped those tiny hands of hers over her face to hide the tears in her hazel eyes as she murmured, brokenly,—

"Yes, all over. So ends my love idyll!"

At half-past ten Adah and Nora retired, after bidding Jack good-night; but Jack Dornton's wife did not go to bed at once. Her head ached, and it was rather close indoors, so she went to the window, and opening it, knelt on the deep window seat and gazed out at the beautiful, calm night scene.

There was a new moon shining in the clear, dark heavens, and it shed its pure light on the sombre-looking trees in the grounds below; on the many pretty-shaped flower-beds, and the smooth water that gleamed darkly through the tall branches of the trees. She could see the

gandy bodies of the fireflies as they circled round and round above the damp marshy banks of the river, and from under a great clump of evergreens gleamed the bright lamps of glow-worms.

Presently the sweet, shrill notes of a nightingale rang out on the still night air, startling Adah a little, for her thoughts had been far away. She was thinking of the little village where she was born, and where, when she was scarcely old enough to judge the extent of her loss, her mother died, leaving her to the care of two maiden aunts, who, though worthy dames, were terribly stiff and harsh.

"Dear Jack," she whispered softly, as she raised her eyes, which had grown black with emotion, to the sky where the stars were twinkling merrily, "it was a hard life before I met you."

Suddenly there came to her the sound of footsteps on the gravel path below, not stealthily as those of an intruder, but steady, firm steps; and in the pale moonlight there appeared, coming from the house, the figure of a man. He was about the same height as Jack, had the same upright carriage, and peculiar trick of putting his hand up to his face as he walked; but his back was turned, and she could not see his features.

Then again there was a slight rustle, and a tiny figure ran quickly across the lawn, and in another moment the man had turned, catching the girl in his arms. One glimpse was all Adah caught of that pale countenance; but that was enough. It was Jack! There was no difficulty in recognising the slim, little form of Nora Alginstone.

Yet stay; a doubt crept across her mind; she would not like to swear that it was her husband who met their guest in the garden at night. She would wait until they returned, then she could obtain a good look at Nora's companion.

And so she waited on until it grew quite chilly and dark; rain-clouds gathered in the sky, completely hiding the moon and pale stars, and a misty pall crept over the earth; and then, in the grey light, she saw Nora pass swiftly up the pathway and enter the house; but she was alone. Where, then, was her companion of an hour ago?

With a shiver Adah rose and closed the window.

There was a doubt, and she would not even now condemn them; the future should decide. So she told herself as she quietly disrobed.

She heard her husband's footsteps ascend the stairs after a time, and listened as he passed to and fro the dressing-room with slow, uneven steps, and then she fell asleep.

There was a little spice of restraint in Adah's greeting next day when she met Nora on the landing, but, at the same time, she felt a thrill of pity pass through her heart at sight of the pretty pale face and almost haggard eyes of her guest.

Nora was evidently not happy in her clandestine love meetings.

"You look as if you had passed a sleepless night, Nora," she said, putting her hand under the girl's chin and raising the sweet, girlish face till the hazel eyes met the blue: but though she shrank from their scrutiny there was no guilt in their clear depths. "I must have been mistaken," thought Adah, and she stooped and kissed her friend lovingly. "Her secrets are not mine."

"Hallo, you two making love!" cried Jack, coming down the stairs with a pale, but merry face.

"Well, we had no one else to make love to," replied his wife, with a laugh. "Come along, the coffee is just made."

And so they sat down, looking a very merry little trio indeed; and the birds sang softly in the great oak tree that shadowed the breakfast-room window, and the distant lowing of cattle could be heard through the open casement.

"Could you two row up the river and meet me at the Point?" asked Jack, suddenly, as though a thought had just struck him; and Nora glanced eagerly at Adah, who smiled as she answered,—

"Yes, Jack, it would be pleasant. At what time, dear?"

"We could row up to the wood beyond the Point if we liked," he continued, as if following out a train of thought.

"But, Jack, I repeat, at what time shall we be there?"

"Oh, about four. I have finished that work, thank Heaven!"

This last was said in such a fervent tone that Adah laughed outright.

"Really, you lazy boy, you seem to positively detest work—at least, lately," she cried.

"I detest that kind of work," was the reply given, with a quick glance at Nora, who sat listening with burning cheeks and downcast eyes to their conversation.

"Oh, I hope nothing will happen to prevent our going!" she kept reiterating in her own mind, but her lips never moved.

"What does our guest say?" cried Adah, looking across at Nora. "We have quite forgotten our 'manners,' Jack!"

"That is all u—," he began, then paused abruptly, while a flush rose to his face—a deep crimson flush that did not recede for some time.

"I should like it exceedingly," said the girl, in a low, tremulous voice.

She could hardly trust herself to speak, her emotion was so great.

After breakfast the two girls went upstairs, and sat chatting till lunch was announced, and then when that had been discussed they went up again and dressed.

They loaded the locker of the boat with dainties in case of hunger, and then started.

Adah, who was skilful with the oars, rowed, and Nora steered.

The day was as fine as the preceding ones had been. The sun shone down warmly on the darkling water, and Adah pulled rather close in shore to obtain shelter from its too ardent rays beneath the weeping willows that bordered the river for miles.

They laughed and sang little snatches of song as the boat sped on, leaving a thin track of white foam behind them, and soon there came in sight a piece of high ground, almost a cliff, jutting out into the water, which here eddied and foamed as though there were some counter-current.

About half a mile beyond was the wood Jack had mentioned, its tall, dark trees clearly defined against the blue sky, and a little nearer an open space dotted here and there with trees and clumps of bushes.

They saw Jack crossing the open as they steered closer in shore, and soon he was assisting them to land.

He laughed as, when they reached the open, they produced the basket of provisions; but nevertheless he did full justice to them when they had spread the cloth.

"I am going into the wood to gather some roses," said Nora, in an excited voice, getting up hastily with a flushed face.

"Run along then, you baby,"—Adah was seven years her senior—"but don't lose yourself."

She and Jack sat conversing in low, subdued voices, as in the old days, the first of their married life, until Nora's tiny figure had disappeared in the gloom of the wood.

"Will you come for a stroll, Adah?" he then asked, rising from the ground, and shaking the bits of grass from his clothes.

"No thank you, dear; I am so tired after that long pull," she replied.

"I forgot that, little wife. It is no joke to pull a couple of sculls nearly two miles," he said, stooping and kissing the fair face as he walked away with his cigar between his lips.

She sat there until the sun went down behind the trees, leaving the earth covered as with a grey mantle; then, feeling rather anxious about Nora, she rose and walked towards the wood. Perhaps she would meet her. She hoped so, for she felt tired out.

But she went on, and so Nora appeared, till she arrived at length beneath the shade of the trees that skirted the wood, and there she paused.

"Nora, darling!" said her husband's voice, but so changed she scarcely recognised it, "I thought I should never be able to get away, but here I am at last, pet."

Adah staggered forward a few paces, and through the thick, guarded trunks of the ancient trees, brightening the murky gloom of the darkening wood, she saw Nora's crimson-robed figure, and beside her, one arm round the little waist, Jack—yes, Jack. There was no mistake this time. It was her husband whom Nora met by stealth.

"Oh, merciful Heaven!" moaned the young wife, as she turned and walked with tottering steps back to the Point.

Not very long afterwards Jack and Nora appeared, both coming in opposite directions. Nora held in her hand a bunch of pale, wild roses, which filled the air with delicious perfume; and there was a radiant, happy smile on her face which seemed to have regained some of its old piquancy. Jack, too, was looking brighter than he had looked for some time; and he thought, "Her love has brought that look to his face," stabbed Adah more cruelly than a knife.

"Have you rested yourself, dear?" said Jack, bending over her as she reclined on a heap of shawls; "because it is getting late."

"I am ready to return home whenever you are, Jack," she replied, coldly; and he glanced quickly into the lovely face that had grown so icily cold with a look of anxiety in his dark eyes.

"Then we will start!" cried Nora, with one of her old merry laughs, at which Adah almost shuddered. How could she be happy with such deceit in her heart!

"We have had a glorious day," observed Jack, as they rowed along in the twilight. "Did you get those roses from the wood, N— Miss Alginstone?" he added.

"Yes," was the answer, very quietly spoken; but as she thought whose hand had plucked them her heart beat and throbbed so that she felt inclined to scream. She conquered the feeling, however, and began to sing in that rich, thrilling voice of hers,—

"I heard a voice long years ago,
A voice so soft and sweet and low,
It whispered to my heart of love,
And nothing there forgot to rove."

A quiet, almost unnatural stillness reigned over the earth. The voice of the birds was hushed, and a soft, grey mist was creeping slowly up the sloping grassy banks of the river from whence the faint sweet odour of wild flowers was wafted in a gentle scent-cloud.

The lowing of the cattle in the fresh green fields had ceased; even the oars seemed to shoot noiselessly through the smooth, still, dark water, and Adah felt a mysterious chill creep over her.

It seemed to her that the sun of her life had set, and that this was an omen of what her life would be in the future.

She did not speak even when the last note of Nora's song had died away in a soft whisper, but sat there in the stern of the boat looking like a figure carved in stone, as motionless, as upright; and when her husband bent forward with the remark,—

"Will you sing, Adah?" she replied, coldly,—

"Thank you, Jack, for the compliment, but I am really tired."

He did not make any reply, but a strange expression of pain swept across his swarthy countenance as he once more bent to the oars, and neither of the little party spoke again until they reached the boat-house at the end of the grounds; then, as they walked slowly along the tree-shadowed path leading to the house, Nora broke the silence,—

"Adah," she began, nervously, "you will not think me unkind if I leave you to-morrow. I did not know until—"

Then she paused with a little air of distress.

"Do not apologise, Nora, pray; you have your own convenience alone to consult," replied Adah Dorton, still in that icy voice.

"But I cannot explain to you, though if you

knew all you would understand and appreciate my motives."

"I daresay!"

There was a touch of sarcasm in the cold tone now, and the blue eyes flashed.

Nora gave one deprecating glance into her friend's face, and seeing that she was deeply vexed about something refrained from speaking on the subject again.

"Dinner has been waiting half-an-hour, sir," said the servant, coming forward as they entered the house, and so they went in as they were.

"Jack, I wish to ask you a few questions on a very painful subject."

The young wife's tones were very steady, though fraught with pain, and the great dark blue eyes gazing at him were bright and dry. Nora was upstairs packing, and she had chosen this opportunity of speaking, for she felt that she could not rest without some kind of explanation from her guilty husband.

"Well, Adah, what is this terrible question?" he asked, carelessly flicking the cigar ash into a little silver tray on a side-table; but though his tone was quiet a feeling of dread stole into his heart.

"I wish to know why you and my friend Nora Algintone arrange secret meetings in our grounds, and in the wood near the Point?"

Her words fell sharply and clearly on the stillness, and Jack Dornnton stood there, as if struck dumb, staring at his wife, facing him in her calm, accusing purity, with horror-struck eyes. His face had grown ashen, and his pale, rigid lips moved, but no word came from them.

"Enough," she continued, and her cold voice seemed to cut the air; "your silence is proof positive; besides, I saw you on the lawn last night, and in the wood this afternoon, when you thought I was resting."

"Oh! Adah, bear with it a little while. Oh! I have faith!" cried Jack, hoarsely, and the wife's heart thrilled at the loved voice. But, no; he had broken his vow. She could never trust him again.

"Faith!" she echoed, "you are mad, Jack. Can you give me no explanation of your conduct?"

"No," he replied, dully, almost sullenly; "at least, not yet."

"Very well, Jack, then we must part."

And with these words she walked from the room with erect head and firm footsteps, but with a feeling as of death at her heart.

"She never loved me, or her faith would be greater," muttered her husband, staring gloomily out of the window, as though endeavouring to pierce the dense gloom outside; and, upstairs, Adah knelt beside the satin-covered bed, with pale, despairing face, and white, clasped hands.

"Oh! Jack, my love! my love! that I should have lived till this day!" she moaned. After a time she rose, and lay down on the bed, falling into a deep sleep very soon from sheer exhaustion.

The hall clock was just chiming the hour of ten when she awoke with a start; and getting hastily off the bed she bathed her face and hands in some cool toilet water, and having smoothed her hair, descended to the drawing-room.

As she entered the apartment, which was half in light, half in shade, giving a peculiar aspect to the room, she heard the words—

"I was so afraid Adah would ask to come with me—"

Then Nora, who was the speaker, becoming aware of Adah's presence, stopped short.

"Why have you not had the burners lighted? The room looks wretched," said Adah, quietly.

She did not appear to have noticed that they were engaged in earnest conversation.

It did not matter much now, she decided. They had both proved themselves false, and cruelly deceitful.

However they talked and whispered together now it could not make them worse, and so she pretended to be unconscious, and taking up a book appeared to be deeply absorbed in the contemplation of some views, though she was in reality wondering where she could go; for she had fully made up her mind to leave the home which had once seemed a perfect Paradise, but

which had now become hateful to the young bride.

At twelve o'clock on the next day Nora and Adah were walking slowly up and down the railway platform waiting for the mid-day express, but there was no smile on Adah's sweet face; only a haughty look of half-interest passed over it when her companion addressed her; and Nora's pretty, piquant features looked quite sharp and pale, and the hazel eyes, usually so bright were dim, as though their owner had passed a sleepless night.

"I wonder why Adah is so strange in her manner to me! She cannot possibly—no, that is out of the question; no one but Jack and I could know."

So ran her thoughts, and even while she was trying to solve the problem, the train puffed into the station.

Nora kissed Adah almost wistfully as she leant out of the carriage window; but her caresses met with no response, and it was with a sigh of relief that she felt the train move off.

Two days after Nora's departure Adah went into Jack's little room to ask him some question about dinner—they never spoke except to ask or answer a question now.

He was not there, but on his table was an envelope addressed in his bold, well-known handwriting to Miss N. Algintone; the letter itself was open, as though the writer had left it to dry, and Adah took in the first words in that one quick glance.

"My darling, Adah has discovered all about our secret meetings—"

She did not read any further. That was quite enough; and even in the midst of her agony Adah remembered her honour. She turned suddenly and left the room, and went up to her own apartment.

In about an hour she came down the stairs, and opening the front door closed it softly after her, and walking hurriedly along the hard, dry road, soon disappeared from view.

And so the afternoon faded away; the shadows lengthened on the smooth, wide lawn; the sun sank to rest, leaving faint flecks of gold on the silent bosom of the broad river; the bees ceased their busy hum; and Jack, waiting in the little sitting-room, began to wonder, with an unaccountable yearning and longing, what had detained Adah in town.

When dinner was placed on the table he sat down and made a miserable attempt at eating; but it was of no use, and pushing his plate from him he went out of the apartment up to his dressing-room.

The first thing that caught his eye as he struck a light was a note pinned to the coat he usually wore in the evening; in his anxiety he had forgotten to dress for dinner, and so had not found the note until now.

Clutching it eagerly he read the few words written there, a glare of almost maniacal sorrow lighting his dark eyes.

"Jack," the note ran, "I have gone away for ever. Not to my aunt's. I have a hundred pounds of my own money left, and when that is gone I can earn more. You will be glad to be released; but it is less hard to think of your joy than to witness the struggle that is ever going on in your heart, which now is filled with love for Nora. I cannot bear that."

"Good-bye,

"ADAH DORNTON."

That was all. Jack read it over and over again, then, crossing the room, he rang the bell sharply, and fell forward on the thick, soft carpet a lifeless heap; and there the servant who answered the ring some few minutes later found him.

CHAPTER III.

IVY BANK was a large house built of grey stone, standing in the midst of immense park-like grounds, and the only habitation for two or three miles.

The sun was glinting through the tall fir and

dark cedars that sheltered the building on to the lace-curtained windows and broad terrace, which was ablaze with great stone vases filled with the most gorgeous of summer flowers. In one of the rooms on the ground-floor sat two people, both of the gentler sex.

The elder lady was dressed in a pale grey morning robe, trimmed with delicate mauve ribbon; on her soft white hair was a filmy lace cap which set off the sweet motherly countenance and clear, brown eyes.

Her companion was a young girl in the pride of a lovely youth, but there was an expression of repressed sorrow round the pretty mouth and lurking in the dusky depths of the deep blue eyes that told of a troubled life.

"She has seen trouble," decided Mrs. Thorpe; then aloud, "I am perfectly satisfied with Madame Breslau's reference; and as you are here you might as well stay; your boxes can be sent on. That is," she added, with a kindly smile at the weary girl, "if it is perfectly agreeable to you."

The young girl's tired face lighted up at the elder lady's words, and a little flush rose to the roots of her golden hair.

"I should be pleased to stay now," she replied, in a low sad voice, "for the railway journey is a long one."

"Very well, then," said Mrs. Thorpe, ringing the bell. "I will introduce you to the children, and then you can go to your room and have some rest. Bring Miss Gertie and Master Julian here, please, Jane," she added, as the nursemaid, who was awaiting the summons, appeared.

After a few minutes the door again opened, and Jane entered leading two children by the hand. The girl, who was the elder, came forward with pretty, shy grace, and held out her hand.

"You are my new governess Jane tells me," she said, in a sweet childish voice, and the girl's face flushed and her heart quickened its pulsation as the child lifted her brown eyes to her face. Those eyes reminded her of another pair, and she felt drawn towards her little pupil at once.

"And this is Julian, Miss Somerville," observed Mrs. Thorpe, smiling pleasantly.

Gertie had evidently taken a great fancy to her new governess, and the boy also, for he lifted his pretty baby face to be kissed.

"I am sure we shall get on well together, they seem such doddle, loving children," replied Adah, or Miss Somerville, as she now styled herself; and then the maid, after taking the children to the nursery, showed her to her rooms. A sitting-room and a bedroom had been prepared for her use.

When the tired runaway wife found herself alone she went to the window of the sitting-room, which communicated with the bedroom, and stood lost in admiration of the pretty scene.

This window commanded a wide view of the grounds; on the left was a small lake fringed with tender young saplings, and at the edge, bending over till their delicate green fronds almost kissed the water, grew giant ferns.

The sun was shining through the branches of the trees on to its smooth surface, and she could see the figure of a young man, as he sauntered leisurely along in the cool shade with his hands in his pockets.

Directly beneath her stretched a broad patch of grass land dotted with oaks, chestnuts and beeches, and to the left lay a garden separated from the grounds by a high, quick-set hedge.

This garden was a perfect gem; great masses of monthly roses climbed the hedge and dotted the ground, and gorgeous tiger-lilies and their pale stately sister stood erect in the morning sun.

There was a little soft breeze blowing, and the rare, sweet perfume from the garden ascended and stole gently in at the open window, bringing with it a message of hope and peace to the weary heart.

"Here, at least, I shall find peace," she sighed, and then, a feeling of faintness stealing over her, she lay down on the bed in the next room, and soon fell into a sound sleep.

The girl awoke with a start as the great dinner-bell clanged through the house, echoing along the

wide corridors, dying at length in a faint trembling murmur.

She raised her head from the pillow, and for a few seconds stared round the large, well-furnished apartment in amazement, then, remembering, she sank back again with a little sorrowful cry.

It all rose up before her, that past fortnight, with miserable vividness—the flight, the long railway journey down to her old school, the week of waiting before she answered Mrs. Thorpe's advertisement, and her final journey down to Ivy Bank.

What was Jack doing? Was he sorry about her or glad, or had he thrust all thoughts of her out of his mind?

A knock at the door aroused her from her painful reverie, and in reply to her words "Come in!" Jane entered.

"If you please, Miss Somerville, Mrs. Thorpe sends her compliments, and she supposes you would prefer having your dinner in your own room to-day as you are tired," she said, with a sympathetic glance at the lovely pale face.

"How thoughtful and kind of Mrs. Thorpe! Tell her that I am exceedingly grateful for her kindness, and should greatly prefer it here, as I am really fatigued," replied Adah, a little formally, as she saw with a woman's keen instinct that Jane was inclined to gossip.

She did not wish to live on bad terms with the servants, and could not satisfy their curiosity; better let them think her stiff and prim.

She did not go downstairs again that evening. Mrs. Thorpe came upstairs after dinner, and talked with her for a while, telling her how and how lonely the life of her son, Gertie and Julian's father, had been since the death of his wife, and how that, now they were growing older, she hoped the children would draw his thoughts from his sorrow. Then after a few graciously kind words in regard to her duties—which to the girl appeared to be very slight—Mrs. Thorpe left Adah to her sad, desolate musings.

But as she stood in the school-room next morning talking to her little pupils, who clung round her slender, black-robed figure in childish affection, she did not look quite so desolate. These little creatures had won her heart with their big brown eyes, so like Jack's, and their pretty winning ways, and she felt that the future held for her, at least, a life of comparative ease and assured peace.

"Now, children, we must commence lessons," she said, quietly releasing herself with a gentle hand; and they took their seats in cheerful silence.

The warm sun stole in between the boughs of the trees outside, and rested in a golden shaft on the yellow-haired woman, seated there listening with a gentle smiling face to their innocent prattle; and the birds kept up an incessant chirp, that mingled pleasantly with their voices.

When the morning's tuition was finished she sent Gertie and Julian upstairs to have their outdoor things put on; and having thrown a little pink fleecy shawl around her own shoulders took them into the garden for a walk before dinner, which they had in the nursery at two o'clock.

Several days passed on, and she grew to love her pupils more and more. Was there fate in this, or was it merely a strange freak of chance? She always took them out after lessons, and in looking forward to that wild happy run they tried hard to learn quickly and well. And, thanks to Adah's care and patience, they succeeded.

One morning they were walking in the sunny garden, when Gertie startled Adah by suddenly exclaiming,—

"There he is, Julian!"

"There who is, dear?" asked Adah, with a smile; but Gertie had run quickly forward to meet a young man, who had just emerged from the shade of a clump of cedars.

"Uncle Douglas!" said Julian, and Adah turned to look at the new comer. She gave a start as he drew nearer, and she could see the dark, swarthy face, and large brown eyes of "Uncle Douglas;" then she smiled involuntarily.

"How absurd I am," she murmured; "I

imagine a likeness to Jack in every man I see. I think my brain is a little turned."

Still she was very pale, and her sweet lips quivered as with pain when a moment later the young fellow—he was scarcely more than nineteen-and-twenty, to judge by his looks—came up to them, and bowing respectfully, said, in a rich, manly voice,—

"Miss Somerville, I presume!"

Adah responded by a very stiff bow. She did not know how Mrs. Thorpe would like this chance meeting, therefore she would err on the right side, she decided, if there were any error, in her stiffness of manner. But there was a cadence in the full, modulated tones that sent a strange undefinable thrill through her heart.

Douglas Thorpe lingered for some time with his little nephew and niece, making them run races for sticks of chocolate cream, and playing ball when they grew tired of running; then, when they neared the house, he bestowed a tender kiss on their fresh, young cheeks, and a look of pleased admiration on their new governess, and again lifting his hat walked away.

The girl's purple eyes wandered in his direction, as he slowly paced beneath the shadow of the trees that bordered the lake, and a nervous, chill, superstitious feeling crept through her as she noticed him raise his right hand ever and anon to his face.

She had fancied that action peculiar to Jack, her husband (how the mere thought of that name sent the crimson to her pale cheeks!); but here was an utter stranger who had the same trick; or stay, was there some explanation here of the secret—

Adah broke off here, sharply, in her self-communings. She must, indeed, be going mad. Then she became aware that Julian was speaking.

"Is he not a dear old uncle?" he was saying. "He is very fond of me; see this hat! he gave it me, and that large rocking-horse."

"And he gave me that big doll, that cries and laughs, and the large doll's house!" cried Gertie, proudly, determined to show Adah that she was as great a favourite with her uncle Douglas as Julian.

Thus they passed along the shady walks, where the sweet smell of beans sometimes filled the air, the children prattling away in their shrill trebles, and Adah listening with a quiet, calm expression of her lovely face that changed to a little smile of interest as she now and again answered some innocent, wondering question.

Several days more passed away, and although Adah met Douglas Thorpe often in the grounds when out alone and with the children, she had never once seen him in the house; and she began to feel a little surprised at this, for she always dined with the family at seven.

Perhaps he was of a studious turn of mind, and preferred to have his meals sent up to him. Whatever he was, whatever he did, it was certain that he never communicated with anyone in that quiet, orderly household.

One day, however, some five or six weeks after her arrival at Ivy Bank, when Adah entered the long, darkly-furnished dining-room, she saw Douglas Thorpe standing on the hearthrug conversing in low, earnest tones with the master of the house.

He turned with a grave half-look of pleased recognition on his swarthy face as she came forward, looking very lovely in her evening dress of black lace and coral ornaments set in chased gold.

Douglas and she were duly introduced then, and he gazed in surprise at her young, almost child-like face after she had been talking with him some little while.

Where had she obtained that knowledge of human fallings, human frailties and passions that usually come only to the disappointed? And surely she could not have met with any disappointment. She, so young, so lovely, so winning.

"Your new governess is deucedly pretty!" he observed to his brother, as they sat over their

wine after Mrs. Thorpe and Adah had retired to the drawing-room.

Mr. Thorpe was a quiet, reserved-looking man of about forty, with dark hair and eyes—all the Thorpes were dark—and a pale, wearied, pre-occupied face, that seemed to tell of the thoughts of that other world that were ever with him.

"I have not taken much notice of her. She struck me as being very ladylike and quiet when I first saw her," he replied, with a far-away smile. "But, Douglas, I feel very anxious about Julian. How are we to manage it without discovery? It must be done, I know, or he will die, but how!"

"Oh, that will be all right enough. It must be put off, say till twelve, when everyone will be in bed."

Mr. Thorpe gave a sigh of relief, and wiped his forehead as he rose and went to the window.

"You always contrive to settle a difficulty, Douglas," he said; "but how unfortunate that the moon is at its full," he added, as a new thought struck him.

"We must put our trust in the clerk of the weather; perhaps it will rain," replied Douglas, cheerfully. "But I say, old fellow, if I am good at solving a difficulty you are a good hand at damping one's ardour," he added.

"I wish that Julian had died in his infancy. Poor Julian, it would have been a mercy!"

"My dear brother, I scarcely think that he would agree with you in that kind wish," observed Douglas Thorpe, with a grim smile. "Shall we join the others now?"

He did not wait for an answer, but left the apartment for the drawing-room. He found Adah and Mrs. Thorpe seated on a couch talking in quiet, subdued tones, and as he gazed upon the fair face, on which the light from the crystal chandelier fell, a thrill passed through him, and the memory of a frail-looking golden-haired girl, with tender blue eyes, who had passed into that land without night, made his face look unusually grave as he crossed to her side, and asked, in a low, strained voice if she would oblige them with a song.

Adah rose with a little inclination of her head, and as she raised her eyes to Douglas Thorpe's face there flashed into his eyes a look so like Jack's that she nearly cried out.

But it was gone in a moment and he stood beside her, merely a dark, rather handsome man, with large, serious brown eyes.

Adah turned over the music on the delicately-carved stand and found several songs she knew, and these happening to be some of Mrs. Thorpe's favourites she commenced to sing in her rich, clear voice.

"You have a lovely voice, and your rendering is perfect, my dear child!" said the old lady, when she had finished "The Blue Atlantic Mountains," and Adah flushed. "Now, Douglas, sing something together."

So the evening passed away till the clock struck eleven; then Adah rose and asked if she might retire.

Those songs had been too much for her. Jack's face looked at her from every page of music, Jack's voice breathed in every chord.

Mrs. Thorpe gave assent to her request with a pleasant, motherly smile, and bidding them all good-night, she went up to her own comfortably-furnished rooms.

She went into her sitting-room to get something ere she retired, and seeing the moon shining in at the window crossed over and looked out.

She had been standing there for some moments when suddenly, in the fairy garden below, she saw a man's face clearly in the pale light—Jack's face, white and haggard, with a wild, despairing look in his great brown eyes, but still Jack's face, so well known and loved in spite of all.

Throwing up the window hurriedly she leant out, but in that one brief moment the apparition had disappeared.

The garden below lay quiet and peaceful, the tall flowers and young rosebushes making queer little shadows on the broad gravel paths, but there was no living form there; not the rustle of a leaf sounded in the still air.

The moon rode high in the vaulted heavens, casting down a clear light that rested like a benediction on the sleeping earth.

What could it mean! The white despairing face could not be the imagination of her brain! It was too real!

Still she stood there for quite an hour, and the same undisturbed stillness reigned over the place; and so, with a miserable, restless feeling, she closed the window and went back to her bedroom.

"You were up late last night, Miss Somerville," observed Mrs. Thorpe next morning, as they sat at breakfast. "I heard you close your sitting-room window," she added, in answer to Adah's look of surprised inquiry.

Douglas looked keenly at the sweet face that had grown so strangely pale at his mother's words, and then he took up some letter and commenced to read.

"I could not sleep," replied Adah, briefly.

"But I think it is always best to go to bed, it rests one if one cannot sleep. You must go earlier to your room to-night."

There was an eager, anxious light in Mrs. Thorpe's eyes as she spoke, and she glanced across the table at Douglas with a look that plainly said—

"What am I to do!"

"I shall be very glad to avail myself of your offer," said Adah, and then she rose and went to the school-room, where her willing pupils were already seated.

When the morning's lessons had been gone through, she took the two children out for their usual walk, and then, giving them in charge of the nurse, she went up to dress for dinner and have a little rest.

Dinner was usually a very pleasant, cheerful meal with the Thorpes, but that night there was a kind of brooding quiet in the manner of all that struck Adah unpleasantly. Mrs. Thorpe was evidently excited about something, and her two sons glanced gravely at one another across the long table with its glittering glass and gleaming silver, and rich, rare smelling flowers.

A feeling that she was an intruder stole over Adah as she noted the restraint they all put upon themselves; and when the meal—the first she had ever found tedious in that house—was finished, she bade them good-night, and, taking her candle from a side-table, she went up to her rooms.

She was very glad of the excuse to retire early, for she had determined to keep strict watch over the grounds, and solve, if possible, the mystery of the previous night.

Throwing open the window, she seated herself in a low chair, well in the shadow of the curtains, and where, if there was anyone in the garden below, they could not see her. If that were indeed Jack, then he would surely come again. And so she waited.

It was a calm, still night; there was no moon yet. The sky was clear and dark, and the stars blinked and sparkled in unrivalled brightness; but presently, from behind a broad hill that stood out a solitary spot in the darkness, across the wide river there shot a clear pale ray, and gradually the Queen of Night rose in silvery splendour, mounting higher and higher till the whole landscape, hills, wood, calm river, and grounds were blotched in its pure light.

Presently, as she sat there with faintly beating heart and white waiting face, there fell upon the almost solemn silence the stealthy tread of footsteps. Leaning slightly forward, still in the shadow of the curtains, Adah saw Jack, walking feebly, and leaning on the arm of a young girl as though for support.

She could see them both plainly, for the moon's rays fell straight on to their faces. The girl was Rose Dalton, a friend of Mrs. Thorpe's, whom she had seen several times at the house, and on a few occasions she had stayed to dinner. But what was she doing there at the dead of night walking in the garden with her husband!

How feeble he looked. Was it possible that grief for her had brought him thus low? His clothes hung loosely on his shrunken frame,

and on his face, as he conversed in a subdued whisper with Rose Dalton, there rested a gray look of pain that touched the young wife's heart.

In her excitement Adah forgot the strangeness of Jack's presence at Ivy Bank, her only thought was how could she contrive to see him.

"Oh, Heaven!" she murmured, "he is ill, perhaps dying. My place is by his side; and yet I left him of my own accord."

While she breathed those few broken words she did not take her eyes off the two slowly pacing the crisp, wide gravel path, nearly beneath her window, and a swift, cold revulsion of feeling came over her as she saw him draw the girl's bright sympathetic face towards him and press a kiss on her white forehead.

After that they walked nearer the house, and the man seemed as though about to faint, for he leant against the trunk of a young poplar, and the girl bent over him in silent sympathy; then presently they turned, he looking feebler than before, and entered the house.

Every doubt was banished now. It was indeed Jack whom she had seen, but the mystery was great, ay, greater than ever. Why did he only come out at night? When had he come? Where did he live—in what part of the house? These and countless other vain questions passed like lightning through her throbbing brain; but no answer came to her in the darkness and solitude of her quiet chamber, and rising, she went into her bed-room, leaving the window open.

CHAPTER IV.

ADAH awoke next morning feeling weary and tired, and with a dim sense of something unusual having happened; then she rose on her elbow and listened intently, for there was an unwonted sound in the house.

Swift, hurried, yet soft footsteps passed to and fro, and the gentle murmuring of hushed voices came to her ear.

She looked at her watch. It was a quarter to nine, the exact minute when the strict old butler always rang the breakfast-bell, but no sound broke the stillness, all was silent, but for that strange murmur of voices and gentle hurrying of feet.

What could have occurred? she asked herself, as she rose and commenced to dress with nervous haste. This did not take long, and opening the door of her bed-room she passed down the wide-oaken staircase on her way to the breakfast-room.

She met two or three servants, but though she noticed a quiet, subdued expression on their faces she did not question them. It would not be in good taste.

Mrs. Thorpe and her son were seated at the table when she entered. Douglas was not there.

A feeling of oppression came over Adah as she took her place, and then she noticed that the blinds were down, shutting out the bright golden sunshine and the glorious view of the fresh dew-kissed earth.

Glancing across at Mrs. Thorpe she saw that the sweet motherly face was pale and tear-stained, and round the kind brown eyes were great dark circles.

Her hands trembled, too, as she poured out the coffee. She noticed Adah's glance, for she set the coffee-beggin down and said—

"Someone whom we held very dear is dead."

Her voice quivered as she spoke, and the tears coursed rapidly down her cheeks; while Mr. Thorpe rustled his paper noisily, coughed once or twice, and then swallowed his coffee boiling hot.

"I am truly sorry, dear Mrs. Thorpe," replied Adah, softly, not knowing exactly what to say, for she felt that the sorrow that had come upon them was a deep one.

"You can take a holiday, Miss Somerville," continued the elder lady, with a sad attempt at a smile. "I have sent round to Mrs. Dalton's to ask if she will have the two children for a day or two."

Adah bowed her golden head; and the grave, true sympathy in her quiet, subdued manner

touched Mrs. Thorpe, for she rose and pressed a kiss upon the girl's fresh young cheek, and then hurriedly left the apartment. Soon after Adah followed.

There was a horrible fear and dread of she knew not what at the girl's heart; and the solemn silence of the great house and grave, mysterious faces of the servants did not help to quell the feeling.

She even shivered as she stood for a moment in the warm sunlight that came through her window; then she slowly drew down the blinds.

She turned away, and after putting on her hat and scarf went out into the bright, sunlit garden down to the lake, where the water-lilies lay smiling in the warm, pure air; but even there, with the birds carolling gaily in the trees, the bees humming drowsily from flower to flower, the tiny fish darting underneath the broad, dark shining leaves of the water-lilies; even there that same fear of some terrible woe overhanging her wrapped itself like a pall around her and drove all enjoyment of the sweet, perfect morning away.

It was so quiet, so peaceful out there that she continued her walk, wandering aimlessly down the avenues and walks till the hour for luncheon, and then she returned to the house.

As they took their seats at the long table Adah saw that Douglas Thorpe was not there, and a pang almost of pain crept into her heart. Surely it was not for him the house was thrown into mourning!

"Mr. Douglas is not here!" she said, in a halting voice.

"No," replied Mr. Thorpe, in a husky tone, and with a look of sorrow in his usual preoccupied eyes. But it was the silent repressed agony on old Mrs. Thorpe's face that made Adah feel as though she could bite her tongue for having spoken those thoughtless, almost heartless words.

"He is—" commenced the elder woman, and then broke down, glancing piteously at the young face bending over her, for Adah had risen from her seat and come to her side.

"Oh, madame, dear Mrs. Thorpe!" cried Adah, putting her arms impulsively round her neck, and mingling her tears with the sorrowing woman's; "I did not know, I did not guess—"

"Guess what, my child?" asked Mrs. Thorpe, looking up in surprise, and wiping her eyes.

"That he was dead. He looked so well yesterday; but I suppose his heart was diseased," said Adah, gently, stroking the soft hair that lay in silvery waves on Mrs. Thorpe's temples.

"Douglas! heart diseased! My child, he is not dead!" exclaimed her companion. Mr. Thorpe had quietly left the apartment and they were alone.

"I am so glad," whispered the girl, breathing a sigh of relief. "But, then—who—?"

"Hush, dear, I cannot tell you any more," said Mrs. Thorpe, solemnly, and as she spoke she rose, pushing Adah gently from her, and rang the gong for the table to be cleared. "You will come down to dinner," she said, as she and Adah stood at the foot of the wide, crimson-carpeted staircase together.

"Yes; I should die of loneliness upstairs," replied Adah.

Dinner was over, and they were all sitting in the drawing-room, a quiet, sad trio, when the sound of wheels coming swiftly along the gravel drive startled them out of their gloomy thoughts. Then the hall-bell clanged through the house, arousing a thousand echoes, that seemed to quiver and shake in the quiet old house; then a voice asked in a rich, low, manly tone—

"Where is my grandmother?"

As that voice fell upon Adah's ear she started to her feet, her cheeks paling, her lips quivering. That voice was surely Jack's!

"You are ill," cried Mrs. Thorpe, putting her slender fingers on the nervously clasped hands; but Adah made no reply, only stood there with those startled blue eyes and parted red lips.

Presently firm, hasty footsteps were heard coming along the great hall, and then the door opened, and a man, travel-stained and haggard, entered the room.

He stood for a second in the doorway staring

at that tall, golden-haired vision standing in the centre of the twilight-room, then a cry rang through the air,—

"Jack!"

"Adah!"

The cry was simultaneous, and next moment the slender form was clasped close in Jack's strong arms, and the golden head rested on his breast for one brief moment; then Adah drew herself away with a sudden hardening of the perfect mouth, and an aughty gleam in her blue eyes.

He had not yet explained! And how strong and well he looked in spite of those lines round his mouth! What had made him look so ill last night? But it was useless to try and think, everything seemed maddening.

Meanwhile the two elder ones stood looking on in utter amazement. What was the meaning of all this! Jack embracing the children's governess!

"Grandmother," said Jack Dornton, turning to Mrs. Thorpe, and kissing her pale surprised face, "this is my wife!"

"Your wife!" cried mother and son in a breath. "Then, Jack, you have acted very wrongly in—" added his grandmother, reproachfully.

"My wife!" he echoed. "But, Adah, grandmother, I have come here on a sad and bitterly mournful errand. I will explain all afterwards. Now, will you take me to—"

He broke off suddenly as though speech failed him, then followed Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe out of the room, leaving Adah standing there in the perfumed dusk with whirling brain and wildly throbbing nerves.

What did all this mystery mean! Grandmother! Then she had unconsciously come into the family he had so wished her never to enter. Yet they seemed friendly.

She could not understand it, and so she sat down and waited—waited until the darkness fell upon the earth, and an awful silence reigned in that great house; and as she sat there alone straining her eyes to make out the different familiar objects in the grounds beyond, a superstitious horror crept over her, and a nameless something seemed to tell her that the mourned dead lay in one of the rooms at Ivy Bank.

Presently she heard the sound of several softly-treading feet, and she breathed a sigh of relief; then the door opened, and four figures entered. She guessed that Douglas made the fourth; but the darkness was too intense for her to see their faces.

"No light!" exclaimed Mr. Thorpe, a little sharply. "Is there anyone here?"

"Yes, Mr. Thorpe," said Adah's low, sorrowful voice, "I have been quite frightened of the dark, but I did not like to ring for lights."

She did not glance at her husband when the guest had been lit, but waited for him to speak. He did not keep her long in suspense.

"Adah!" he said, turning to her with a grave look on his face—the look rather of a wronged man than of a sinner pleading for pardon—"take me to your room. I wish to speak with you alone," and she silently led the way.

"This is my private sitting room," observed his wife, crossing to the window from whence she had witnessed the scene in the garden the night previous.

"Now," began Jack, in a stern voice, "will you tell me why you have acted so madly, and broken your most solemn marriage vows?"

"I think, Jack," she returned, stung by his tone, "that it would have been far better had I gone where you could never have found me. Remember, I was a witness of your meetings with Nora. I saw you in the garden when you thought I was asleep. I saw you in the wood together. And can you explain this? I have seen you twice in these grounds at midnight—once with Rose Dalton, and saw the caress you bestowed upon her. I suppose it was the moonlight that made you look so pale, and what I took to be faintness was emotion. Truly, Jack, you appear to possess an exceedingly large heart!"

"Stay!" he cried, passionately, as she was about to speak again. "Adah, that man whom you have mistaken for me was my unhappy twin-

brother. Why should I suffer for his sins any longer?"

"Your brother!" she faltered; "but—" "Come with me," said he, quietly, and passing out of the room he led her down a long corridor, through the picture gallery, where Jack's eyes looked down at her from so many dark, handsome faces framed in heavy gold frames, and so into a smaller square hall, where he paused, and, touching a spring in the wall, opened a tiny door. They passed through this and descended a few steps, and Jack again stopped in front of an ordinary oak door this time.

"He is here," he said, in a low, but stern voice.

They entered the darkened room, over which an awful chill stillness hung, and Jack approached the great mahogany bedstead and drew down the sheet, thus disclosing the calm, peaceful features of his twin-brother Julian.

The face, even in the marble majesty of death, was so like Jack's that a thrill of horror crept through Adah's heart; but a pressure from the living hand made the blood flow warmly again. There had been a terrible mistake, but it was all past now.

"How calmly he sleeps!" murmured the brother; then he turned to his wife. "I will tell you here in his dead presence what I swore should never be revealed during his lifetime."

"Our father was of a very easy-going temperament and good-tempered, and, being exceedingly rich, he had no occasion to curb our desires in the least. Poor Julian was always extravagant in his ideas and actions. Even at school I remember his pocket money was always gone a few days after he received it, and then he would borrow mine, for I never cared about spending money."

"Well, when we left college, of course we went home; and on our twenty-first birthday my father called us into the library and asked us what professions we were going to choose; for, though he had ample for both to live in ease and comfort upon, he held it best for young men to have an object in life."

"Julian replied that he wished to study for the Bar, and soon after that he went up to London and took chambers in the Temple. That was the beginning of it all. He met friends there, who, hearing his father was rich, tempted him to gamble and bet; and then one miserable night—shall I ever forget it?—he came down to us as the clocks were chiming the midnight hour, looking wild and scared, and whispered the horrible truth into my father's ear."

"He had committed forgery—had signed the name of another man on a cheque for a thousand pounds to pay a bet—a debt of honour—and the officers of the law were even then on his track."

"The shock killed my father. He died three days afterwards. We hid Julian in a secret chamber—this very apartment; and when the officers came to search for him they found only the dead body of his father, for no one could have found out the yellow room who did not know of its existence."

"When they saw me they took me into custody, and it was a bitter humiliation to me to have to send to our friend Sir John Heycourt, the magistrate, and request him to vouch for my truth."

"Of course, I was released, but the secret of our disgrace had been told."

"Since then Julian has only come out at night; but when I wrote to him under cover to grandmother, of course, and told him that Nora Algistone, to whom he was engaged before he went to his ruin, was with us, he madly came down and hid away in the wood beyond the Point."

"The hut he slept in was the home of a gipsy who would have done anything for money. It was he, dear, who asked me to arrange that trip to the Point."

"It was of him Nora and I were speaking that day in the poplar walk—Julian whom she met, Julian whom you saw last night."

"He died five minutes after he left the garden. The doctor, Rose Dalton's father, told us that he was afraid that he would not last long. Remorse has killed him; poor Julian!"

"Darling wife!" he added in conclusion, "here by his side, for whose sin I have so deeply suffered, let us renew our marriage vows."

And the grief-stricken remorseful wife bowed her golden head on his breast, and putting her arms round his neck asked forgiveness for her want of faith.

"But, Jack," she whispered.

It seemed sacrilege to speak aloud in that still, dark chamber, with that face, calm and majestic, in death before them.

"It looked so strange, dear. What could I think! You should have trusted me, your wife."

"Yes, dearest, I was to blame in a measure, but Julian would not release me from my vow, and so I had to suffer for his sin."

"And, Jack, how strange that I should have come here!"

"There is one thing I have not told you, wife," he continued, not appearing to have heard her words. "This house belongs to me, but my grandmother has always lived here, and always shall. I have no real work to do; the business that has occupied my time of late was connected with Julian's sin. I have been searching among some old papers for the actual forged note which the man whom he sinned against told me I might have if I could find it; he was afraid that John Rawson, a rejected suitor of Nora's, had got hold of it in payment for something, but I found it only yesterday, and now he is dead. Poor Nora!"

A ray of rich golden sunshine struggled through a crack in the venetian blind and rested like a benediction on the pale, dead face, and it seemed to tell of the forgiveness of One who is more merciful than man to Adah's fancy as she gazed in wonder at the calm, placid features that had looked so wild and pain-worn in the moonlight on the previous night.

"I can understand a great many things now," murmured Adah, softly, putting her hand into Jack's with a sad smile.

"We will return to the others now," he said, gently replacing the sheet; and then they went softly out of the room, where lay the man who had, after all, been more sinned against than sinning, and so up to the drawing-room, back to the light and life, and Adah breathed a little sigh of relief.

"Jack has explained all to us," said Mrs. Thorpe, rising, as they entered, and pressing Adah's hand tenderly, and Mr. Thorpe held out his hand with a grave smile of welcome; Douglas was not there.

"So you are my niece," he said, "and now my children will lose the governess whom they have learned to love so dearly."

"They will have one who will fulfil her duties better, perhaps," replied Adah.

"I think not. Jack, my boy, you have a very clever wife," he returned; and then, after a little conversation, which could scarcely be other than dull, seeing that the pall of death hung over them, they retired to their separate rooms.

"Why did Nora leave us so suddenly, and why did you both look so bright and happy that day at the Point?" asked Adah, as she stood by her husband's side in the library next morning. The family had finished breakfast, and as Jack was going to write letters she had followed him there.

"She was happy, for I had discovered that the note was not in the pitiful clutches of John Rawson, but she was utterly miserable at heart, dear, for she despaired of ever finding the actual whereabouts of it; and then, too, she felt that something had come between you two who used to be such friends, and so she went back to her grand, solitary home."

"How I long to see her again—poor Norrie, and explain my mistake!" cried Adah, remorsefully.

"You will not have long to wait, then, for grandmother wrote to her yesterday, and she telegraphed back that she would be here to-day."

Adah gave a pleased smile, and then, seeing that Jack looked somewhat pre-occupied, she

left him to write his letters in the solitude of the darkened room.

The funeral, which took place two days after, was a very quiet one. The chief mourner was a girl, who stood a small, still, black-robed figure by the open grave, while the minister read the beautiful words of the service in a rich musical voice that seemed to soothe the scarred soul and send comfort to the weary heart.

The meeting between the two friends had been sad, but loving. The clouds of misunderstanding had been cleared away.

It had been arranged that Nora should stay at Ivy Bank for some time—"as long as they would have her," she expressed it.

But Jack wanted his little wife all to himself, and so a few days later the carriage was brought round, and several boxes were piled on the dog-cart.

Presently the great door opened, and the two happy young married lovers came out into the garden, followed by Nora. It was just at sunset; and the lake looked like a sheet of ruddy gold, and through the thick grown leaves the sky gleamed golden and blue and pale amethyst.

"Good-bye, Norrie!" cried Adah, turning back to give her friend a last fond kiss.

And then the horses turned, and Jack, glancing back, saw Nora standing there a solitary, lonely, little figure, with pale, folded hands and upraised eyes, as though in silent prayer. When he looked back again she was gone, and the last faint colour of sunset with her. The house was wrapped in the twilight, as was her life.

The railway journey was a long one, and it was night—clear and starlit—when they arrived at—

There was a chill breeze, but the steady fire of perfect love was in their hearts; and as they once more stood upon the threshold of their old home a thrill of infinite joy crept into their souls. They went out into the garden to see the moon rise, and there we will leave them, pacing the smooth, wide lawn, the pale, tender light of a new moon gleaming through the awaying branches of the tall trees into their grave, yet happy faces, as they conversed in low, earnest tones; the burden of their conversation being the unhappy, misguided author of sweet little Nora's broken love dream.

[THE END]

INTERESTING ITEMS.

—101—

Of all the quaint and curious customs of the House of Commons, none is more amusing than the strange ceremony which marks the termination of its every sitting. The moment the House is adjourned, stentorian-voiced messengers and policemen cry out in the lobby and corridors, "Who goes home?" These mysterious words have sounded every night for centuries through the Palace of Westminster. The performance originated at a time when it was necessary for members to go home in parties for common protection against the footpads who infested the streets of London. But, though that danger has long since passed away the cry of "Who goes home?" is still heard night after night, receiving no reply and expecting none.

In character the head-dress of the women of Umbria is more Italian than Breton. The coiff is small and square-shaped, with a wide flap hanging down behind, and it is white when the wearer considers herself dressed and not in mourning. Bright colours, chiefly scarlet and blue, are often introduced at the side of the head, especially in the case of children. But the strong singularity of the coiffure is the manner in which the hair is worn. It hangs loose upon the back of the neck to the length of six or eight inches. The first impression the women make is that they are all recovering from a fever and a cropping. The hair is generally lank and wiry, like a horse's mane, and very dark. It is rare to see it really grey, even on the head of a very old woman. The short and thick locks are often without a

silver thread, although the face of the wearer may be as furrowed as a block of seaworn granite. Baby girls, young women and old women have their heads dressed in exactly the same way. After her swaddling wraps the child is given the style of coif and other clothing that she will keep through life; consequently, as she toddles about in front of the cottage door, she is one of the oddest little figures. In full dress the gown is always black, but a brilliantly-coloured handkerchief, in which scarlet predominates, is so worn as to show a little down the front of the bodice. A small shawl, generally blue or red in the case of children and young girls, completes the costume.

THE ascent of mountains and the carrying of necessary articles up very steep inclines necessitate an enormous amount of labour and time. It is possible to put up wire-rope tramways at a very small expense, and have these so arranged that loads can be brought up at a minimum of the cost and trouble now involved. A sample of this device is a wire tramway recently put at Gibraltar. It connects the signal station at the top of the rock with the town below. There are two ropes, three hundred and twenty yards long, leading to the mountain. An engine works the ropes, which are able to sustain a weight of seventy tons. The transit from the town to the station occupies scarcely five minutes, where formerly it took a whole day. On the general principle of the carriage line that delivers parcels and change in stores, an effective and rapid means of transit between various points may be secured. The rope-tramway idea is yet in its infancy, but before another ten years have passed this invention will be utilized to connect buildings of all sorts. It would be of untold value could a simple rope and basket be so arranged that one might pass from house to outbuildings regardless of snow, storm or rain, stepping from one sheltered entry at the house to another at the barn without coming in contact with the ground. The time and need are here, and only await the inventive genius who shall put these into practical operation.

THE five-fingered orange is a queer thing. It grows in exactly the shape of a human hand, with a thumb and four fingers. It is a half-open hand, that of this curious fruit, and the closer resemblance to a lean, long-nosed Chinese hand is startling. Even the nails are identical, hard-pointed and claw-like, tipping the orange fingers with a length equal, in some cases, to three inches. It is no interloper in a well-regulated family of oranges, but a regular member, belonging to the orange variety. It has a family name, and a Christian name of its own, but its pet name is "five-fingered orange," and nobody but the botanist cares to call it by the long one, which means the same thing. The orange tree is a ragged little shrub that does not average more than five or six feet in height. It does not grow straight, and it would be very difficult to find two consecutive inches in the entire tree whose line of direction is the same. Even the branches grow in spiral forms, so that the width of the tree is often as great as the height. There is a generous supply of thorns hidden under the leaves; they are slender, tough, and long, and are located in all sorts of unexpected places. The leaves are fleshy, long, and narrow, and of a dark green colour. They resemble a lemon leaf more than an orange leaf. Indeed, in both this instance and in the colour of the ripened fruit, this singular plant seems to claim a very close kinship to the large lemon family. The flowers come out in June and July, and are very similar in appearance and odour to the ordinary orange blossoms, save that instead of the familiar creamy white colour they have a delicate pinkish tint which is very beautiful. They commonly grow in clusters of two or three blossoms on alternate nodes. The strangest thing connected with the perfume is that it is the fruit and not the flower that is most odorous. The fruit when ripe is so redolent that its scent can be recognised a mile from where the orange is growing.

THE only two varieties of icebergs that are worthy of consideration, owing to their importance, are icebergs and ice floes. The icebergs are originally simple in form—just huge hunks of

ice. They are entitled to the name of "berg" or mountain, only because they appear as such on the flat surface of the open sea. When seen close to the mountainous, rock-bound coast of Greenland, close to where they have been thrown off by the glaciers, they look remarkably small and insignificant. Roughly speaking they are about as large as a house, and vary in size about as much as houses do. To be more accurate, few are over one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet in height, and icebergs reaching a height of three hundred feet are exceptions. The bergs of northern seas are not so broad and long as those of the Antarctic Ocean, the latter not infrequently covering a surface of over a square mile. The former therefore look like huge blocks, rather than the huge fragments of ice plateaus of the Southern polar seas. Furthermore, the southern icebergs appear to be composed of two or more strata or layers of ice, and are far clearer than their northern sisters, on account of their freedom from foreign matter and the purity of the ice which composes them. These distinctive features are not so prominent in the old-bergs which have been partly melted and broken away by the water. The porous glacial ice of the bergs is about one-seventh lighter than sea-water, and only one-seventh of its bulk juts above the surface of the water. It must not be imagined, however, that an iceberg, one hundred feet high, reaches six hundred feet below the surface. This would be the case if the berg were an exact geometrical figure, which it is not. It is one-seventh of its bulk which appears above the surface, and not of its height. The part under the water—the remaining six-sevenths—may be made up in width and breadth, rather than depth, as indeed is generally the case.

AS IT FELL UPON A DAY.

—102—

CHAPTER XXIX.

It can easily be imagined that Anne Huntley returned to Silchester later in the day in a far from relieved or comfortable condition of mind.

All that Bastian had been fowed to tell her lay upon her heart like a physical pain.

She yearned over Rachel, and the folly the girl had committed. She was not actually anxious about her sister.

She felt that Rachel was safe, in a sense, and she could not but agree in the flight from Nestville, and from immediate chance of meeting with Hamilton.

Yet, though she was not anxious, Anne was full of sorrowful sympathy, of despair on her sister's account, and on Bastian's almost as much as Rachel's.

She suffered again and again all the misery that had rung out in the man's voice when he had told her the story of his own heart's destruction and Rachel's desperate folly.

Loving him as she had loved him, Anne could not but weep with him for the utter desolation that had fallen on his hopes.

She winced as she conjured up the future that lay before her. There was no one thing to give her comfort.

She had to return and fight out Eleanor's battle with her uncle, and here she was determined she would oppose the harsh workings of fate to the utmost of her power.

Eleanor should not leave Silchester immediately; at any rate, not until she had matured some plan for the girl's future.

Anus's hopes and wishes for a marriage with Philip Robinson faded slowly away as she sat alone in the railway-carriage being whirled back from London to her home.

She seemed to ally herself for the first time altogether with Eleanor's feelings, to understand the girl's shrinking from the subject of a possible marriage.

She had, too, something of Rachel's sensation that her sister's foolish and miserable act had deprived Eleanor of the chance of having alone—

ment made to her by the only person who could offer this statement, and though she knew Eleanor's pride well by this time, and was too well convinced of the horror with which the poor creature shrank from the mere mention of Hamilton's name, yet the fact remained that had he been still free he could have been forced to make her his wife, and have offered her this poor reparation of the shameful and wanton wrong he had done to her.

Looked at, therefore, from any point of view, Rachel's rash, and, to Anne, wholly inexplicable act, was a matter for nothing but troubled thought and regret, and when at last she reached Silchester Anne's spirits had fallen to their lowest ebb.

She had to rouse herself, however; there was Bastian's mother to be considered, and, moreover, she had to give some good explanation of Rachel's silence and continued absence from London.

The secrecy of the marriage would be broken now very quickly Anne knew; but she did not feel morally or physically equal to broaching the subject for the immediate moment.

She shrank, too, a little from meeting Eleanor; but this was something she would conquer. Anne was not one to be afraid of duty, however disagreeable, and Eleanor's future was to her now almost the greatest duty her life would contain.

Her uncle's manner was not conducive to making things easier that night, especially when Anne quietly declared that it would be impossible for Miss Foster to move away from Silchester for at least another week.

"I cannot arrange for her departure before then," Anne said very coldly.

The Rector was extremely angry.

"I scarcely recognise your position in this matter, Anne," he observed.

Anne answered him quickly.

"I act on Rachel's behalf, and my own, Uncle Hubert. I may add that I am only too glad to do anything in my power for Miss Foster, whom I regard as my friend."

"The whole business is objectionable—most objectionable," Mr. Langridge said loudly; "such a scandal has never occurred in Silchester till now—and for this I have to thank my own niece. So much for your 'pride and interest in the parish, Anne!'"

Anne was silent.

She suffered sharply in this moment. We all have our pet ambitions. Anne, when she had realised the emptiness of her love dream, had turned to her work in the parish with a zest which, allied to her real cleverness, had brought about, as the rector knew well, a vast amount of good.

Anne had grown into being considered his right hand. She had been content to take a secondary place, and to let him pose as the one great benefactor.

She had had both pride and interest in the work, and his words hurt her deeply; she had long ago learned the value of silence in any argument with her uncle, and she would have refrained from speaking now, had not her own innate sense of justice forced her to stand beside Eleanor.

"I am sorry you look upon Miss Foster in so harsh a manner, Uncle Hubert," she said, hurriedly and yet coldly; "and I am more sorry still that some chance venomous words from such a man as Captain Hamilton should have been the means of turning you against a woman who has done no wrong to any living creature. However, I see plainly I cannot set this matter right; you have your own ideas and will hold to them. Eleanor Foster will leave Silchester, be very sure of that, and Captain Hamilton can be satisfied at the result of his cruelty."

Anne did not wait to let the rector's anger find a vent; she went upstairs to her own room dispirited, anxious, and very sad.

The wreck of Bastian's life was a sore trouble to Anne. Sometimes against herself a little bitterness would creep into her thoughts of Rachel.

"If she had not been so blind, so careless, how much sorrow Rachel might have spared us. In those old days if she had only seen the truth what a load of misery she would have lifted from

her young life. It is too hard on Bastian," Anne cried half fiercely to herself.

By-and-by, as was natural, her thoughts veered round to tender remembrance of Rachel.

How sweet and lovely the girl was—how fascinating in her wilfulness, how true in heart, and warm, and loving!

From Rachel it was an easy step to think of poor Eleanor.

Anne had had a long conversation with Bastian as to what was best to be done for Eleanor. Leave Silchester she must; but where could she go?

"I will think out some plan and write to you," Bastian had said, when they parted; "try and keep her for a week or ten days."

This, as we have seen, Anne was determined upon doing.

She fell asleep at last, promising herself to go quite early to the village and to Eleanor the next day; but the excitement of her journey to town, and all attendant upon it, had brought about one of the rare attacks of neuralgia which alone were able to prostrate Anne and keep her from her work.

It was evening when she felt well enough to drag herself from her bed, and looking strangely ill and weak, Anne, despite Mrs. Langridge's protests, determined upon paying her visit to Eleanor.

"A walk will do me good," she said, with a wan smile.

She had been anxiously hoping for some news from Bastian. It was not pleasant to have no exact knowledge of Rachel's whereabouts, and Bastian might have had another telegram.

There was nothing, however, from him, and Anne only had strength at the moment to go on with the duty she had laid upon herself where Eleanor was concerned; the other worry threatened to live longer, and be stronger than any Anne had had as yet.

Eleanor was sitting in the dusk of the little cottage home when Anne passed up the garden. It was too dark for the women to read the look on one another's faces, but the way their hands clung together was full of eloquence.

"Why do you come out when you have been so ill?" was Eleanor's remonstrance.

"A mere headache," Anne said, bravely.

She sat down by the window.

"Tell me all you have done to-day, Nell," she added softly.

Eleanor paused a moment.

"You have met Mr. Lithgow?" she queried, instead of answering Anne's speech direct.

Anne turned with a start.

"Bastian? No; I did not even know he was here. I suppose I missed him in the village."

"He left me about a quarter of an hour ago. He was not going to the Rectory—he was going to Corby Court, I believe."

Eleanor's voice always hastened when she had to speak of anything belonging to Giles Hamilton.

"He came down late this afternoon from London."

Anne had become thoughtful.

"It is strange he did not let me know he was coming. Did he speak to you of Rachel?"

Anne asked hurriedly.

Eleanor said "yes," very gently, then she added, "she is in some little Welsh village, Mr. Lithgow told me."

There was silence between the two women again, a silence which Eleanor broke.

"Mr. Lithgow has told me everything, dear," she said softly.

"Ah!" Anne gave a deep sigh; then she rose and went over to where Eleanor sat in the dusk. "I should have come to you early to-day had I been well. You know, without words, that you have my loving friendship always, Nell."

"I know it," Eleanor Foster said, quietly.

She was too deeply moved for any outward sign.

"I have been grieved beyond any power of description," she went on, in a low, whispering voice. "This is what I feared all along—what I prayed might never come to Rachel. Oh! why is it that our prayers are so feeble, sometimes?"

Her hot, weak hands clung to Anne's.

"I tried to prevent this—I sacrificed my place in

her life to spare her from this—and yet—I failed! Oh! Anne, did I not tell you this man's wickedness was greater than we could reckon with?"

Anne made no answer in words, she only stood stroking Eleanor's hands awhile. She was thinking more about Bastian. Why had he come down suddenly, and why had he gone to Corby Court?

"You are sure, dear," she asked, after a few minutes, "You are sure that Bastian has gone to meet him?"

Eleanor bent her head.

"Yes; Mr. Lithgow told me he had had a most insulting and horrible letter from Captain Hamilton this morning. I—I do not know exactly what had occasioned him to write insultingly, except that Mr. Lithgow said something about a meeting and a quarrel they had had together at Nestville. I suppose this man must be in a dreadful state of anger with Mr. Lithgow!"

Anne assented.

"Yes; I suppose he must hate Bastian. Poor Bastian!" she added, under her breath.

She began to imagine quickly the sort of letter Giles Hamilton had written to Bastian. There must have been threats in it of a kind to rouse Bastian's usually calm nature to the verge of madness. The fact of Hamilton being at Corby Court was, of course, accounted for by the business that had followed on his mother's death.

Possibly Hamilton had declared his intention of going to the Rectory, and putting the whole story before Mr. Langridge. Whatever might have been the cause, the fact remained that Bastian had come to Silchester. Anne felt without further knowledge that he was strung up to a pitch of passionate resentment against Giles that made a meeting between them regrettable to a degree.

She was careful to say nothing of this to Eleanor, however.

Instead, she sat for a long time discussing the girl's future. She grew more like her usual strong, helpful self as she combated Eleanor's dependency.

The weaker and sadder Nell was the stronger, the more determined Anne became.

"You belong to us—to Rachel, and Bastian, and me," she said over and over again, "and we three staunch friends cannot fail you, Nell, dear."

"My heart is dead—my courage gone," Eleanor said, feebly.

"Oh! you do not know how your goodness touches me! but I am grown such a weak, wretched creature, I do not feel as if I could face life any longer."

"Rubbish!" Anne declared briskly, to this.

"You have to face life, not for your own account, but for ours. There is much you can do for us, Nell. I shall want you to help me all you can."

Eleanor's tears were her only answer to this.

"You see what help I give you," she said. "I bring you trouble at every turn."

"The world is not peopled with Uncle Huberts, fortunately," Anne said.

"I think we will carry out that plan about our old governess, Nell. She is a dear, kind, creature, and she would love you. You could be a great comfort to her. Think over it to-night; but no—don't think too much, dear—you are too weak to lie awake. Promise me me to go to bed now and to try and sleep. I will be with you early in the morning. Don't be lonely, Nell! Remember I am quite close."

They passed out of the cottage and down the garden path together. It was a lovely spring night—the moon was beginning to rise faintly behind the trees already garmented in their fresh green leaves.

The air was slightly chill; but it was indescribably sweet and full of that clear touch of vitality which belongs to each hour of spring.

"I am never lonely," Eleanor said, a wistful smile breaking through her tears. "I have my gallery of pictures up in my little room. I speak to all of them every night. There is dear old dad and the children, and Rachel, and you, and Philip. I have a message from you all before I go to sleep."

She had a pretty wan air as she stood there in the clear twilight.

Anne kissed her gently many times; tears came to her eyes involuntarily as she did so.

"Good-night, then, dear, good-night," she said; "my walk and chat with you, Nell, has done me so much good. Sleep well, and look for me early to-morrow."

Eleanor repeated the words.

"Yes—early to-morrow!" she stood and watched her flit down the road.

There were lamps in the village street; but this was out of the village street, a little quaint humble house standing in its own garden, and belonging to one of Anne's pet pensioners.

Eleanor had lived quite apart here. Her landlady had recognised her as a lady, and had put her at once on a higher level.

She was full of solicitude for Miss Foster's delicate health, more especially since she saw how deeply interested Anne was in Eleanor; but she never intruded on Nell's solitude.

Now as she stood there leaning against the gate Eleanor was absolutely alone, for the owner of the house when she had seen Anne arrive had taken her knitting into a neighbouring cottage for an hour's gossip.

The peace and sweetness of the spring night stole to Eleanor's wearied senses like a soft whisper.

She was weak and tired, but she could not turn indoors just yet.

Out here her heart seemed less full—her path less and thornier. The clear night sky, the rising moon seemed to speak messages of hope and comfort, she could not turn away from them.

Suddenly a footstep sounded on the road outside. Eleanor's dream was broken, she started nervously as was her trick now at the least noise, and as the footsteps reached the gate she roused herself to move away unseen.

She was too late; the man outside had caught sight of her.

Stepping hastily forward he spoke her name in a whisper.

"Eleanor—Eleanor!"

The woman turned back instantly; sudden surprise and a sort of gladness rushed over her at the sound of his voice, then instantly the gladness went as the moon rays fell across the man's face, and she read the white tortured look upon it.

She half stretched out her hand to him, then, like a guilty thing, she crouched downwards till her face was buried on her arm outstretched along the gate.

"Philip!" her lips whispered faintly, "Philip, forgive me—forgive me!"

CHAPTER XXX.

ANNE was late before she went to bed that night. She despatched her aunt to her room in her own peremptory fashion.

"I feel quite well now, and I have had so much bed; besides, I want to write some letters," she said, when Mrs. Langridge feebly protested.

She said nothing to her aunt about Bastian. When she had re-entered the house she had asked Sargent quite casually if anyone had been, or if there had been any telegram or letter. The fact that Bastian had made no sign to the Rectory that he was in the neighbourhood argued to Anne that he was very uncertain whether he would sleep there, although of course the chances were pretty sure that he would. She wrote her letters and sat listening for a good hour after her aunt had retired for some sign of Bastian's coming, but none was given. As Anne at last wearily dragged herself upstairs, she had begun to doubt almost that Bastian had been in Silchester at all, and yet Eleanor had been only too certain.

Anne was unconsciously anxious about it. Why had Bastian come down to Corby at all?

Could not he have written some answer to Hamilton's letter? Anne could not quite see what good Bastian could do by rushing down in this way to interview his enemy.

What did he hope to attain by it? and why had he not let her know he was coming? Search

and self-commune as she would, no light was forthcoming to Anne. She could do nothing but wait for the next day.

Alas! how little, all anxious and burdened as her heart was already, did Anne imagine the anguish that was to be the story of this next day!

Breakfast at the Rectory was a by no means frugal or early repast.

The Rev. Hubert Langridge always enjoyed his meals in leisurely fashion, and he objected strongly to be interrupted or prevented in the fulfilment of this enjoyment.

Mrs. Langridge but rarely made her appearance downstairs before noon.

It was Anne's task to minister to her uncle's requirements at the breakfast table, and she was at her old post at the usual hour the morning following on her neuralgic attack, greatly to the Rector's comfort.

It was all very well to quarrel with Anne, but the Rector of Silchester would have been in a bad way if Anne had permitted the quarrel to enter into her life in such a fashion as to exclude him from receiving such attention as he desired.

Having had one very uncomfortable day through Anne's illness the Rev. Hubert was inclined to be affable and forgiving. He conscientiously determined to heal the breach, and therefore not one word was spoken touching the *casus belli* of the preceding day.

He spoke instead about Rachel.

"I think, my dear Anne," he was saying in his most grandiloquent fashion, "that we must prevail on Rachel to come down and take part in our midsummer sports. It would be a gracious act for Lady Castletown to present the prizes. I am quite sure my parishioners would respond to the attention."

"Rachel will come, I am sure," Anne said hurriedly in answer to this. She drew a deep breath. It was evident by this speech that Giles Hamilton had not so much as given a suspicion even of the truth to her uncle. She could not quite understand why he had not done so; yet she was thankful for every minute that kept Mr. Langridge in ignorance of what had happened.

"Rachel will be very glad to present the prizes I feel sure, Uncle Hubert," she was saying hurriedly, when the door was opened and Sargent came in.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Anne," he said respectfully; "but there's somebody come up from Mrs. Hughes' cottage in a great hurry as says she must see you."

The rector began to frown ominously.

"We cannot be disturbed," he was attempting to say, but Anne had risen instantly.

Mrs. Hughes was the woman whose Eleanor lodged.

"Please forgive me, uncle," she said, "I think I had better go!"

She hastened out as she spoke, and left the rector to pour out his wrath upon Sargent's devoted head.

The Rev. Hubert had not said half he wished to say before Anne came back, her face as white as the blouse she wore.

She motioned Sargent away, and then came close up to the rector.

"A dreadful thing has happened. I—I can scarcely believe it, uncle. That poor girl is dead!"

The rector's face changed colour hastily.

"What girl?" he was beginning, then he checked himself. "Are you speaking of Miss Foster?" he asked, in a whisper.

Anne nodded faintly, and sat down, pressing one hand to her heart and the other to her brow.

"I feel stunned," she said; "it—it frightens me. She seemed better last night—troubled of course—but better. They found her lying dead on the garden path—she must have had some sudden shock; her heart was very weak; but I never thought of this."

The rector cleared his throat and looked lingeringly at the breakfast-table. He rose with the air of one performing a great sacrifice.

"You had better remain here, Anne. This is my duty," he said.

Anne winced.

Every note in his voice carried the suggestion of a reproach.

It was as if poor Eleanor's sudden death was but a finish to the harm she had done by coming into Silchester parish.

"No; this is my duty also," she said coldly.

In moments like this the antagonism her uncle roused in her heart acted as a stimulant to Anne.

She had never been less keen-sighted than Rachel had been about her uncle; but she had always been more tolerant.

She went out into the hall and slipped on a hat and gloves, while she listened to the rector probing into all that the unfortunate girl from the village had to say.

She had that curious wild desire to laugh at the poor creature's fear of her uncle. The Rev. Hubert was not loved in Silchester; but he was greatly admired and feared.

It was the nervous tension in Anne's mind that brought that hysterical feeling.

She ran hurriedly from the Rectory; her feet flew over the ground.

As she entered the little garden where she had taken farewell from Nell only a few hours before she met the doctor of the neighbourhood coming out.

"A clear case of aneurism," he said to her tersely. "I am not surprised, Miss Huntley. I made a hasty examination of the heart the other day; it was in a shockingly feeble condition; but so, indeed, was the whole of the system. Had the end not come in this fashion the poor girl must have passed into a rapid decline. She had literally no stamina left. A gentle, sweet creature!" the doctor added, reverently almost.

He was in a great hurry.

"I am summoned to Corby Court, some one is ill, a servant I presume," he said, as he took farewell of Anne. "I will return as quickly as possible should you require me, Miss Huntley."

Anne went into the little house in a hushed sort of way and was met by Mrs. Hughes, who with many tears related how when she had returned from spending the evening with some neighbours she had been horrified to find Miss Foster lying as she had supposed in a heavy faint on the ground. Calling for assistance the woman had raised poor Nell, and then had discovered that the faint was no faint, but death itself.

There were no marks of violence, nothing to show what could have caused the end to come so suddenly.

"It were a broken heart she had poor lass, Miss Anne," the woman said, earnestly. "I'm told as how there was some story agin her. Well if there is a story it weren't no wrong of hers that I'll swear. A sweeter girl I never met, and if you'll come and look at her Miss it will do you good. She's lying with a smile on her, and she looks for all the world like an angel."

Anne could find no words to give back to the woman. Her mind was too full of the remembrance of the night before, of how Eleanor had spoken and clung to her, and now death stood between them.

She followed Mrs. Hughes upstairs to the little bedroom, her heart weeping though her eyes were dry.

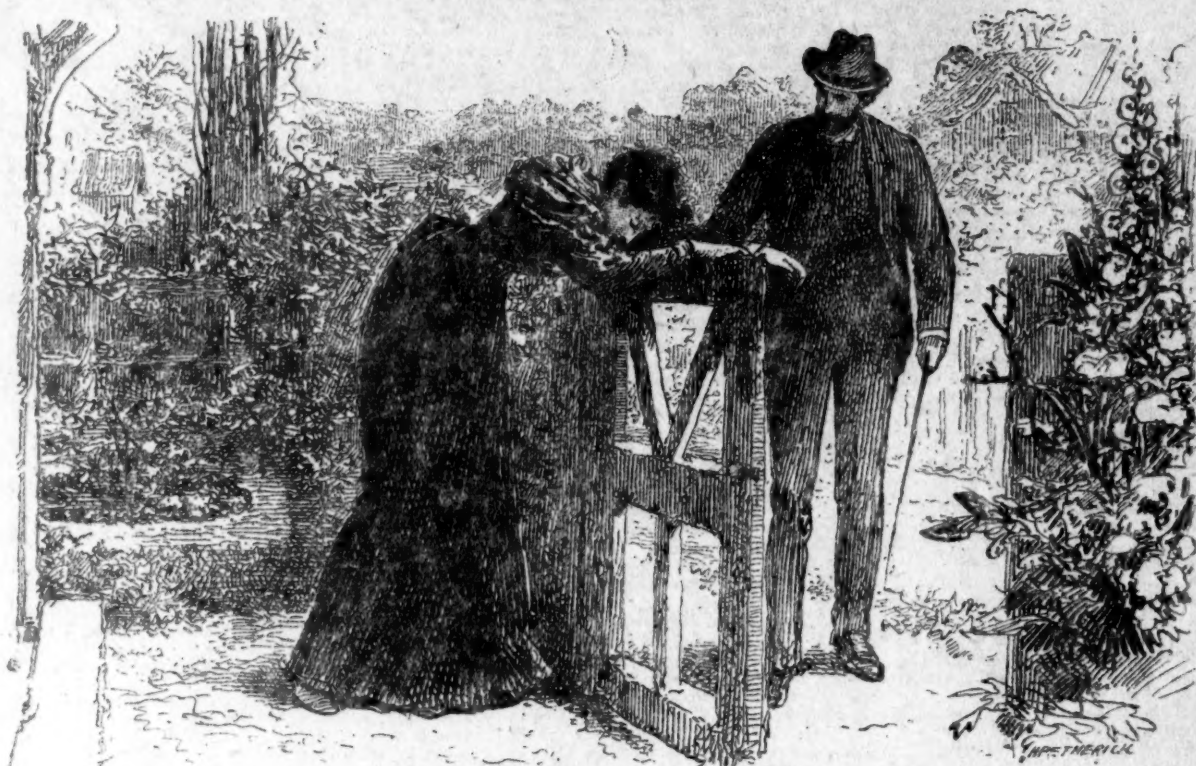
"Oh! if I had not left her!" she was saying to herself, and when she stood in the chamber of death the cry came again and again.

All the pictures of which Nell had spoken were placed round the room, and lying on the pillows the dead girl had, indeed, a smile on her lips as if the message of Death had carried nothing but sweetness for her.

As Mrs. Hughes passed softly out Anne knelt beside the bed, and prayed as she had never prayed before.

She seemed to have lost something of the peace and the working happiness of her own life in this passing of Eleanor Foster. Her heart was more than sad, it was heavy, heavy with a weight she could not determine exactly.

The sorrow of death was not with Anne, for though she had grown to love Eleanor she had seen there was so much pain and grief in the girl's life that the sleep of death seemed almost a solace. It was a curious mental phase that



STEPPING HASTILY FORWARD PHILIP SPOKE HER NAME IN A WHISPER.

came upon Anne in this moment, she could not struggle against it; she could do nothing but suffer it and pray earnestly, despairingly, not merely for the soul of the girl who had passed away, but for the lives and hearts of those who remained. She was a long time on her knees, and when Mrs. Hughes came back to her Anne staggered and almost fell.

"The Rector is below, he's been and gone, and now he's come back again, Miss Anne; he wants you, he seems much upset, and 'deed, Miss, you must not stay here no longer, it will do no good to you, and you've been a saint to this poor creature."

Anne but dimly heard what was passing. She stumbled many times as she passed down the narrow stairs.

A chill touch as of an icy human hand had been laid on her heart.

She had a presentiment she was about to meet fresh trouble.

Her eyes went to her uncle's face, and the presentiment became a sudden reality.

Never in all her life had she seen the Rector as he looked now.

His plump prosperous air was gone. He looked like a man who was ill.

Anne put her hand in his and they walked down to the road together.

"You have something to tell me, uncle," Anne said in a clear hard voice. Her tone had an unfamiliar sound in her own ears.

"I have had a great shock Anne," the Rector said, hurriedly. "This seems to be a morning full of sadness. I have just met Dr. Riley driving in great haste to General Powell's. There has been some awful accident at Corby Court; that poor young Hamilton has been found in the grounds shot through the heart!"

Anne's hand clung to her uncle's.

"Dead! Giles Hamilton dead, too!"

The Rector had to support her.

"This is too much for you, my child," he said, and for once there was nothing insincere or pompous in his manner. The look on Anne's

face sent every thought of himself away from him. "Come, you must let me take you home, dear. I cannot allow you to be so agitated, Anne, you will be ill. Dr. Riley most considerably sent his brougham for you. You had better take it. It would be too long for you to wait while I sent up to the Rectory stables." Anne was too utterly unnerved to do aught but submit.

She let her uncle lead her to the brougham, and she sank back on the seat like one exhausted. Yet her mind was only too clear, too active.

"Tell me all there is to tell, Uncle Hubert," she said as they were driven through the village, where knots of people were already gathered together to discuss the greater tragedy of Giles Hamilton's death and the lesser one of poor Eleanor's.

"There is in truth little to tell as yet," the Rector said, his voice still hushed and shocked. "Captain Hamilton, it seems, came back to Corby early yesterday morning. He was not well, and remained indoors nearly all day. In the evening after dining he went out into the grounds ostensibly for a stroll and to smoke a cigar. He was accustomed to let himself in by a small door, and the servants did not stay up for him. No one seems to have remarked his absence from the house till this morning, when his valet going to his room found his bed unslept in, and everything to show that he had been indoors. A search was made, and they found him lying quite dead in the lower part of the grounds. He had been shot through the heart, and must have died immediately. It is a shocking business!—a shocking business. I scarcely know what to think of it!"

Anne sat with closed eyes and throbbing head as the carriage rolled up the avenue to her home.

Not one of her thoughts framed itself into a rejoicing one or even a grateful one that this death gave Rachel her freedom. She was thinking of a fact far more terrible even than the tragedy itself—a fact that in its bitter portentous and horrible meaning pushed even the

memory of poor dead Eleanor out of her mind, and this fact was the one that dealt with Bastian's presence at Corby Court the night before.

What if Eleanor had made no mistake. What if the two men had met and that they had continued their quarrel, and that—Anne's thoughts seemed to centre in one throb of agony here.

She could almost have screamed aloud in the sudden convincing anguish that came upon her. She had to clench her hands tightly together to prevent her uncle from hearing and seeing the passion of fear that took possession of her.

The Rector, concerned as he was on her account, would have seen nothing to surprise him even had Anne's lips uttered that cry of horror.

He gave a sigh of relief as the horse drew up at the door.

"Now you must rest, Anne," he was saying, "and I must go on—"

His words came to a premature end. Anne had given a hoarse, gasping cry and started forward as though to greet someone, and as the Rector turned and saw Bastian's tall figure standing behind, the girl's over-laden strength gave way suddenly, and she lost consciousness in a heavy fainting fit.

(To be continued.)

WOOD CARPETING is made of slats, or more ornamental shapes, glued or cemented on a cloth backing. The slats or strips of wood are of different colours, and are arranged to produce all the effects of tessellated floors, mosaic works, &c., and being about a quarter of an inch in thickness, they will wear many years. They are finished in oil, and fit together so tightly that the joints are as perfect as those in inlaid work. The surface thus produced can therefore be scrubbed, washed, and oiled when needed, precisely like other floors made of ornamental woods, which floors they resemble in all respects when laid.



BERYL SAT DOWN ON A ROCK AND GAZED WISTFULLY OUT TO SEA.

BERYL'S MARRIAGE.

CHAPTER III.

Mrs. DENT felt herself decidedly worsted in that conversation with Beryl. While she believed her niece's aversion to sentiment to be only a girlish whim, she had not despaired of conquering it, but when she found how cruel a lesson Beryl had received of the perils which beset an heiress, when she heard that for three years the girl had brooded over it in secret, she began to fear the case was hopeless, and that the black sheep of the family would certainly come in for her father's fortune.

It was a bitter disappointment to Aunt Julia, but she felt she had done her best to avert it, and gave up the struggle, instead of making Beryl's life a misery by trying to worry her into matrimony.

"Bless you, mother," said her son, Joe, "you need not despair yet. Take my word for it, Beryl will fall over head and ears in love one of these days, and then it will all be plain sailing. Why, a girl with a face like hers couldn't be an old maid. It would be against nature."

Joe was very fond of his cousin in a brotherly way, and as ever since he grew up he had been devoted to pretty Miss Potter, a school fellow of his sisters', there had never been any thought of his marrying the heiress. He and Beryl "got on" splendidly, and as he always seemed to understand the girl better than anyone else, his mother was much encouraged by his prophecy.

The family always left London for a month in the summer. They were not fashionable, but they believed firmly in sea air and change. This year, however, Joe's wedding had somewhat retarded the exodus, and then, when the day was fixed, one of the married daughters sent a letter declaring she was all alone and must have a visit from her sisters, and so in the end Beryl was the only one of the young folk to go down to Broadgate with Mr. and Mrs. Dent.

These simple folks never went abroad, though

they were rich enough to have afforded a long foreign tour every year. The Dents were homely, unpretending people, and were not ashamed of knowing no country but their own. They went to a different watering place each year, and thus had well-nigh exhausted the list to be found between Yarmouth on the East and Bournemouth on the South-West. They never went further afield than between these limits. Joseph Dent hated railway travelling, and declared he would go nowhere that could not be reached in four hours—he infinitely preferred three.

Broadgate suited him exactly. It was only half the limit of his time in the train. He was lively and unpretentious. He could walk about in a holland coat and straw hat, just as he did in his garden at home. He met a great many other people like himself, retired city men of means, and as he brought his own cook and parlour maid he could be sure of a decent dinner nicely served.

But on the night of their arrival at Broadgate dinner was dispensed with, a meat tea had been prepared in honour of their arrival, and then Mr. and Mrs. Dent sat out on the balcony and listened to the band which was playing on the esplanade, and Beryl put on her hat and hurried down to the sea.

Broadgate was not entirely fresh ground to her. The family had been there in her childhood; but ten years make a good deal of change in a place, and she began to feel she should have to make acquaintance with it anew. But for to-night she wanted nothing but a sniff of the sea, and to see the sun casting a rosy radiance over the water as he sank in the west.

Beryl Chesney loved the sea almost as though it had been a human thing that could feel for her and sympathize in her joys and griefs. Though brought up as one of a large family, she had never been quite one with her cousins; there were depths in her nature they could not sound; she loved them dearly, but she knew there were many thoughts of hers they would not understand.

To-night as she sat on the firm yellow sands—there are no sands in England like those of Broadgate—and looked out on to the sea, a wild longing came to Beryl Chesney that her grandfather had not made that wonderful fortune by his patent soap, or that, having made it he had found another heir. It seemed to Beryl her money would for ever set her apart from other girls, that she could not get rid of the golden burden which so overwhelmed her.

All personal connection with the soap manufactory was spared her. Her grandfather himself had made the business into a company, and beyond a clause in the arrangements which secured to any of his grandchildren a post in the concern if they desired one his family had lost all interest in it.

Beryl had not to walk about fearing she would meet advertisements of "Chesney's Fairy Golden Soap" at every turn. She had not to see her name placarded on large bills on hoardings and the like with the advice, "Try Chesney's Soap." There was nothing of this kind to worry her; but all the same there was the consciousness that she could never quite escape from her responsibilities. In another year she would be of age. Her uncle declared she ought to see more of the world, and she shrank from the idea in horror, for it seemed to her wherever she went she would be mentally labelled by her acquaintances as worth fifteen thousand a year.

But for the money, that fatal money, Beryl would have struck out a line for herself. She was passionately fond of music; her voice was a pure and powerful soprano, and she believed, with time and training, she might have made a successful singer. That was impossible now, it would well-nigh break her aunt's heart; besides, what was the use?

This was the first time in her life Beryl had ever been the only young one in the nest. Two or three days without her cousins had shown her how changed and different the life at the Oaks would be when all the girls had married and fled.

She loved her uncle and aunt dearly; but to live with no other companionship than theirs would make her life a dull thing at the best. There was a nameless sense of something wanting in her future which brought the tears into her eyes even as she watched the waves breaking over the sands.

And then she fell asleep. It had been an intensely hot day, there had been a great many "last things" to arrange before leaving Clapton, and so she was thoroughly tired when she sat down under the shade of the overhanging cliff.

The splash, splash of the waves was a most soothing lullaby, and the soft breeze which began to rise fanned her hot cheeks and gave her the most delightful sense of repose.

She slept as peacefully as though she had been in her bed at home, and she dreamed a dream which often came back to her afterwards to haunt her waking hours, and perplex them with its vivid details.

She thought that she stood before a house she had never seen before, but whose aspect in the dream seemed strangely familiar to her. The street door stood half open. She was dressed for walking, and carried in her hand a small black bag.

There was no creature within sight, yet the house had every sign of being inhabited, and it was borne in upon Beryl vividly that a terrible choice lay before her—to go or stay. She could look down the winding drive and distinguish in the distance the gables of the lodge. If she once passed through the lodge gates she could never return—never, never!

The last word rang painfully in her ears when—her decision still unmade—she awoke, and looking up saw a tall stranger dressed in a white flannel boating suit, watching her with a strange anxiety in his face. It was Sir Denis Adair. What he had come to tell her and the events that followed we know already.

Of the two still motionless forms rescued from certain death at such a terrible risk Denis Adair was the first to recover consciousness. He opened his eyes and looked round in a dazed confused sort of way. At last it all came back to him, and he asked, anxiously,—

"Is she safe? Don't say I let her drop!"

"She is here, old fellow," said his friend, bending over him, "you never lost your hold on her."

"Drink this," said Dr. Lorton, coming forward and bending over the rescued man.

Sir Denis drained the stimulant at a gulp. It gave him new strength, and he looked round the room curiously, demanding,

"Where am I?"

"At my house," replied the Doctor. "There was such a crowd on the cliff, and we had so many offers of assistance, kindly meant, but rather overwhelming, that we thought it best to bring you here. It was close by. How do you feel?"

"Shaken almost to bits, and my arm is so stiff I can hardly move it; but it might have been worse, doctor."

"Indeed it might. You've had the narrowest escape I ever heard of; and done one of the pluckiest deeds too. That poor girl's friends will owe you a heavy debt of gratitude."

"How is she?" asked Denis, starting up, and then falling back on the sofa, for he was so stiff, shaken, and bruised that it was positive pain to him to move.

"She is alive," said Dr. Lorton, gravely. "I suppose she did not tell you her name! It is past eleven, and her friends must be almost frantic with anxiety about her."

"She did not mention her name; she said she only came down to day."

The doctor's wife—a gentle, kindly woman, who had been bathing Denis Adair's wrist with arnica and water—hazarded a suggestion.

"The corner house, in Aubrey-square, was let to a family from London who were coming in to-day. Would it be worth while sending word there? I know that there were two or three grown-up daughters."

"Shoals of people arrived to-day," said Dr. Lorton, in despair; "the place is filling rapidly. Still, it wouldn't do any harm, Maggie, to send across to No. 17; if the lights are out don't let

the servant knock; depend upon it no one would go to bed while one of their family was missing."

But when Dr. Lorton's "handy man" reached No. 17 he had no need to knock or ring, lights were burning in most of the windows, and almost before he turned the handle of the gate an elderly gentleman opened the front door, only to look bitterly disappointed as he found who the arrival was.

"My master, Dr. Lorton, sent me, sir," began the servant; "there's a young lady been nearly drowned, and he don't know her name or anything about her, except that she came to Broadgate to-day. Mistress had heard a new family was coming in here to-day, and she thought—"

"It's all right!" cried Mr. Dent. "Julia," putting his head back into the house; "she's found; I'm going to fetch her home." Then, when they were clear of the gate, "Where have they taken her?"

"To master's sir; the other side of the square. She came to open, but fainted again before they could ask her a single question."

Dr. Lorton met Mr. Dent on the threshold.

"She is alive, and I have not given up hope, but she has had a terrible experience; but for this gentleman's devotion and courage she must have perished."

Joseph Dent would have liked to wring Sir Denis Adair's hands in gratitude, but when he saw how terribly they had suffered in the struggle for dear life—scratched and strained, swollen and dislocated till they looked out of keeping with the pale aristocratic face—he knew that form of relieving his feelings was impossible, and so he only said, brokenly,—

"Heaven bless you, sir! I could not have gone home and told my wife the child was dead; she's the light of our eyes."

Rather a strange thing happened, when Mr. Dent made his way into Adair's presence, Dick had been standing by his friend's sofa. After one glance at the new comer's face he made his escape from the room, and he did not return to the house at all until the uncle had taken the rescued girl home, stretched on a shutter and borne by willing hands.

Not that they knew he was her uncle, for as Mr. Dent spoke of Beryl as "my child," and "our little girl," all present supposed she was his daughter; his gratitude to Denis was warmly expressed, as well as his thanks to Dr. Lorton, a simple kindly man they thought him, wrapped up in his little daughter.

"And well he may be," said Dr. Lorton, "for she has the loveliest face I ever saw. Now, Sir Denis, it is past midnight, and your friend has disappeared; be advised by me and remain here for the night; it's a goodish step to the Royal Hotel, and even if we could get a carriage at this hour the transit must be painful."

"I will stay gladly," said Denis, "if you and Mrs. Lorton will not think me encroaching on your kindness."

They were a childless couple, and glad to do a kindness, besides both of them had taken a strange fancy to the young man who had not hesitated to peril his life for a perfect stranger's. So it was speedily settled, and Sir Denis had been installed in their spare room, when his friend appeared with many apologies for his long absence.

He had been seeking everywhere for a carriage.

"What, they would keep Sir Denis all night! how very kind."

The Lortons did not feel their hearts go out to him as they had to his friend, but they answered his inquiries kindly.

The rescued girl was Miss Dent; her father had taken her home; they were staying at No. 17 in that very square; and they all hoped she would feel no ill effects from that night's work, except a few days' stiffness and a shock to her nerves.

Dick thanked the friendly pair again, promised to be round the first thing in the morning with his friend's toilet requisites, and took his leave.

"Really," mused Dick as he strolled back to Royal Hotel, "destiny is awfully hard on a fellow. Here Adair invited me to put in a fortnight here with him, which meant, of course, that he'd pay the piper, and now after two days

I've got to make tracks. Why in the world couldn't my sanctimonious sister and brother-in-law choose some other place than Broadgate for their 'summer outing.' All City folk have a summer outing, I believe. Joe hasn't altered a scrap. A little stouter and a trifle balder, perhaps, otherwise he's just the same as when he did me the honour to turn me out of his house at Hackney."

"It was a thousand pities I ever gave him that hold on me, but it's done now and can't be undone. Of course, he and Julia will gush over the 'noble rescuer' of their 'darling child,' and if I stayed on I should be bound to meet them. It's a wonder Joe never recognized me to-night; but I suppose he was too much upset, and considering the pleasant little threat he made at our last interview I had really better make myself scarce."

Mrs. Dent had not told her niece quite all Richard Chesney's story. Perhaps she did not know the worst herself, and her husband had kept it from her in kindness; but there was a reason why the scapegrace dared not risk a meeting with Joseph Dent.

Some five years before Dick had forged his brother-in-law's name to a promissory note. He declared that at the time he felt certain of being able to take up the obligation as soon as due, but he did not take it up, and thus his fraud became known to Mr. Dent.

Joseph was honest to the core. He could not bear that anyone should suffer by means of his name. He paid the money—three hundred pounds—and then he went to his brother-in-law, and, in the presence of his lawyer, accused Dick of forgery. Brought to bay, the wretched young man made full confession of his guilt, and Mr. Dent having thus the game in his own hands proceeded to make terms. He would keep the forged bill in his possession, and the moment Dick broke one of the following conditions he would prosecute him with the utmost rigour of the law.

The conditions were only three, and so plainly put that it was impossible to break them innocently. First, that Dick never sought to force himself upon the notice of Mr. Dent or any member of his family; second, that he never mentioned his relationship to them, and, lastly, that if he ever gained the friendship of anyone in whom Mr. Dent was interested he held himself prepared for his brother-in-law sending a full account of his guilty past to that individual.

Hitherto these terms had not pressed hardly on Dick Chesney. He had never cared for his half-sister or her family, and it was no punishment to him to avoid their society. Then he was, as Mrs. Dent told Beryl—ashamed of the family connection with "soap," and had therefore no desire to proclaim his relationship to the inventor of that special make of the article which had won so much public favour. As he moved in very different circles from Joe Dent it was to the last degree improbable that they should ever have any mutual acquaintance. And now Dick found for the first time that Mr. Dent's conditions had power to gall him and interfere with his most cherished schemes. He liked Denis Adair's company, for it did him good socially to be seen about with him. Also the baronet, though poor, was generous to a fault, and Dick found it very convenient to go anywhere with him, as Denis invariably paid for both; but he dared not defy his brother-in-law. If he avoided the Dents Sir Denis would certainly want to know why. If the heiress niece lived with them (Dick was not certain on this head) Sir Denis would remark the similarity of name, and certainly tell his new friends that he had a comrade called Chesney. No, there was only one safe course for him, desperately distasteful as it seemed—flight.

He was round at Dr. Lorton's quite early the following day, and received the physician's verdict that Sir Denis had passed a good night, and that though quiet and rest were needful, and he would probably feel stiff and shaken for some days, there was no reason why he should not return to the hotel, and with moderate care soon be himself again.

"It's most awfully awkward," said Dick, with a regret which was genuine; "but I must leave Broadgate to-day. I heard this morning that my wife was ill, and of course I must go to her at once. I hate deserting Adair like this, but really I can't help myself."

"Of course not," said Mrs. Lorton, kindly. Dick Chesney looked so much younger than he was that she pictured his wife a mere girl. Certainly not a middle-aged woman, her own senior. "Sir Denis will understand the necessity for your going, and we will do our best to look after him for you. Has he no relations who could come to him?"

"He hasn't a relation in the world; his home is ten miles from here, at Heron Dyke, it's a beautiful old ruin, which he is too proud to sell, and too poor to restore. Adair's a real good sort, Dr. Lorton, and I wouldn't leave him like this if I could help it."

He made exactly the same excuse to his friend, but to him he spoke more fully.

"I had a letter from the old lady this morning, and she thinks she's dangerously ill, wants me to rush off to Brighton at once; and as the letter was written on Monday, and has been travelling about ever since, I really see no help for it."

Sir Denis knew perfectly that Mrs. Chesney could cut off her husband's allowance if he displeased her, so Dick's readiness to obey her summons did not surprise him.

"I wish it had come a week later, old fellow; you're the best company I know, and I expect I shall have a proxy time now."

"You wouldn't like to come to Brighton with me?" began Dick, eagerly, thinking how nice it would be still to have his hotel expenses paid for him, and how much easier he should feel if he did not leave Sir Denis within reach of the Dents.

But Adair shook his head.

"Thanks, old fellow, but I'm not up to the journey; a train would shake me to pieces, and I really want quiet and rest. Besides," he added, with a dry smile, "your visits to Mrs. Chesney are so few and far between that I am sure when you do go to Brighton she ought to have the monopoly of your society."

So Mr. Dick Chesney took himself off, and Mrs. Lorton, who had taken a great fancy to the young baronet, easily persuaded him to remain her guest for a day or two.

The Lortons were well off, and could afford to be hospitable, and Sir Denis was peculiarly susceptible to the charms of a gentle kindly woman, perhaps because he had had so little to do with the opposite sex.

His mother had died when he was a small boy; he had no sister, and as he grew up he had rather avoided women, for though as yet he had not brought himself to own he must marry an heiress for the sake of his old name and property, he did know most perfectly that he could marry no one else.

So Mrs. Lorton's pleasant homely hospitality was particularly enjoyable to him, and as she went to inquire after his fellow-sufferer every day it soon fell out that he knew a great deal about that young lady.

Only in one thing both he and Mrs. Lorton made a great mistake, they had not the faintest idea that Beryl was an heiress.

Very early in her visits to No. 17 the doctor's wife discovered that the girl was the *viscè*, not the daughter, of Mr. and Mrs. Dent; but she imagined her to be an orphan whom they had taken in out of kindness.

When Maude and Katy Dent joined the party, noisy dashing girls whose dresses were twice as showy and fashionable as Beryl's, she was confirmed in this opinion.

The Dents never contradicted it, because they had not the faintest idea of her theory, and Beryl who had a dim suspicion Mrs. Lorton believed her to be a poor relation, left her in her delusion because it was such a delightful sensation to be with someone who did not know her pecuniary importance.

"I am sure you will admire Miss Beryl," Mrs. Lorton told Sir Denis; "she is the loveliest girl I ever saw, and they are all so fond of her."

Mrs. Dent makes no difference between her and her own daughters.

"I just remember; I thought she had a beautiful face, though it was rather sad. Poor little thing," he added thoughtfully, "I hope they are good to her; it seems hard somehow that a girl with a face like that should be a poor relation."

"Oh, the Dents are very kind to her. They are very well off too; they have a large house near Clapton, and two of the girls have married City men."

"There's 'City' written on every line of old Dent," said Sir Denis, laughing; "but he's a real good sort. Only somehow that girl didn't look the kind of creature to be content by-and-by with a man who had made a pile over buying and selling and whose highest earthly aim was to be an alderman."

"Well," said Mrs. Lorton with a smile, "you'll be able to judge for yourself to-morrow. Mrs. Dent made me promise to beg you to come to tea, and really, Sir Denis, you are so much better that I couldn't refuse."

CHAPTER IV.

PEOPLE who meet first away from home are at a distinct disadvantage. They can't judge of the tastes and habits of their new acquaintances by the dumb inanimate trifles with which they have surrounded themselves.

Women, in particular, must leave traces of themselves in the rooms they inhabit, especially home-loving women; but the Dents had only been a week in Aubrey-square, and most of that time they had been really anxious about Beryl, so they had not done much to the drawing-room, which therefore remained very much as it had been under the reign of the landlady, an officer's widow, who eked out her income by letting her house in the Broadgate season for fifteen guineas a week.

It was just the usual type of a seaside house, only that instead of the folding doors being shut and the rooms furnished separately as bed and sitting-room the doors had been removed, and the large apartment thus gained made into a drawing-room. There was a balcony in front, with a sea view, and at the back a tiny conservatory had been thrown out.

The furniture was of the nondescript kind, comfortable but ordinary. When the parlour-maid showed in Mrs. Lorton and Sir Denis they found only two ladies present, Beryl and her aunt.

"Mr. Dent and the girls won't be long," apologised the hostess as she greeted them, and then leading the way to Beryl's sofa; "my niece has been very anxious to see you and thank you, Sir Denis."

She had the tact to withdraw to the balcony with Mrs. Lorton, and leave the two young people alone. She felt shy, sensitive Beryl would get her thanks over more comfortably if there was no third person to hear them.

If Sir Denis had thought Beryl beautiful that night on the sands her loveliness struck him still more now.

She was paler, and her face showed she had passed through a great deal since that summer night.

She wore a dress of soft creamy muslin, trimmed with lace, and fastened at the waist with a silver girdle.

One of her feet had been sprained in the effort of reaching the ledge, and it was this rather than illness which confined her to the sofa.

Dent's Adair's injured hands still forbade the ordinary form of greeting, and Beryl felt a fresh sense of the danger they had been in as she looked at the bandages in which his hands were still enveloped.

"I am so sorry," she said; and her eyes rested pityingly on them. "It is all my fault that you are hurt, because you risked your life for mine."

There was a trembling in her voice as though tears were not far off. Denis hastened to reassure her.

"You must not think so much of a few scratches, Miss Dent," he said, kindly; "and, indeed, you overrate my part in your rescue. Really, you are

most indebted to Dr. Lorton and the men who manipulated the ropes; they did far more than I."

She looked at him with a strangely earnest face.

"I shall never forget that night as long as I live. Do you know when I shut my eyes I seem to see that terrible ledge of rock again, and the cruel waves howling for their prey."

"You mustn't think of such things," said Sir Denis, authoritatively; "it's very bad for you. All you have to do is to get well and strong, else you will go away with a dislike to poor old Broadgate."

"I like Broadgate; but then I am very fond of Kent."

"So am I. I am a Kentish man by birth, you see, Miss Dent."

Again he called her by that name unproved; for Beryl had no mind to set him right, because it seemed to her the name of "Chesney" would tell him she was an heiress.

Then they talked of other things. Of his beautiful home, which stood some ten miles off inland, of London, which he said he hated, though he spent most of his life there.

"Why in the world do you live there if you hate it?" demanded Beryl.

"Well, you see a man must live somewhere; and there's always something to do in London. I have heard you live in London too."

"Yes," she answered, laughing; "but far enough from your London. Uncle's house is at Clapton, and when we talk of going to 'town' it means to Hackney or Shoreditch, not Piccadilly and Regent-street. 'The Park' with us is Victoria Park, not that wonderful place that contains Rotten Row. When we go boating it is on the Lea, not the Serpentine, so you see, Sir Denis, my London is quite an unknown world to you."

"I'll confess, since you are so exact, that I have never been farther east than Liverpool-street Railway Station. I'm a lazy fellow, you see, and there's been nothing particular to draw me there; but you, Miss Beryl, surely you go west sometimes. There are some things you know you cannot enjoy your side of Temple Bar. The Academy, and flower shows, and so on."

"I go to the Academy every year," replied Beryl, "because I am fond of pictures; and sometimes uncle takes me to the concerts at St. James's Hall; but it's rather dull for him, as he doesn't care for music, and the concerted pieces are so loud he can't go to sleep. I never go to flower shows, they make me so sorry—for the flowers."

"You are fond of flowers."

"Very. We have a beautiful garden at Clapton."

Sir Denis imagined a plot of say twenty feet square, his experience of suburban gardens was limited, but he thought that was their general area. Then he thought of the acres of ground round Heron's Dyke—what would she have said to them when they were kept up as became a gentleman's estate, and not leased for money to a florist.

Mr. Dent and his daughters came in now, which created a diversion, as the host at once joined the elder ladies on the balcony, while Maude and Katy advanced to make acquaintances with Beryl's hero; they were nice, simple, unaffected girls, Sir Denis thought, and very pleasant in their manner to their poor little cousin; but neither of them had Beryl's beauty nor the intelligence which shone so brightly in her violet eyes.

"You really must make haste and get well, Beryl," said Maude; "there's a regatta next week, and you must go and see it."

"Perhaps your cousin does not care for regattas, Miss Dent," suggested Sir Denis, who detected them himself.

"Beryl's an odd girl," said Katy; "she hates crowds and the things most people like. Her favourite amusement is to go off alone and sit down by the sea, while she is lost in day dreams or castles in the air—which is it, Beryl?"

"Neither," said Beryl, laughing; "it's listening to the music of the waves."

"You are music mad," retorted Katy; "but I do hope you'll be more careful next time you go

to listen to that music; you may not find Sir Denis Adair always there to rescue you."

Beryl flushed painfully, seeing which the other cousin, Maude, rattled on to hide her confusion.—

"Beryl is the clever one of the family, Sir Denis," she told the baronet; "she plays and sings well enough for a professional, and people are always asking for her sketches to sell at bazaars."

"Anything will sell at bazaars," said Beryl, gravely.

"They are always having bazaars near us," went on Katy; "the air is thick with them this autumn."

Denis remembered reading somewhere that assisting at bazaars for charitable purposes was the great resource of middle-class girlhood; but somehow he could not imagine Beryl figuring behind an amateur counter, and pestering her friends to buy things they did not want.

"Oh, Beryl never sells," said Katy, in answer to a remark of his; "we made her one year, but she hated it so she wouldn't ask anyone to buy a single thing, and she got the stall with the most uninteresting collection of rubbish, so she was an utter failure. How much did you take, Beryl?"

"Four and sixpence halfpenny," replied Beryl, laughing, and forgetting to say she had sent a very handsome subscription to the expenses of the bazaar as an atonement for her own shortcomings.

Well, that first visit was but the precursor of many others.

Sir Denis went back to the Royal Hotel in due course; but the intimacy which had begun between him and the Dents still continued; Beryl was considered to need a longer time than usual by the sea in consequence of the shock of that terrible night, so it ended in Mr. Dent going back to the Oaks early in September with Maude as his housekeeper; Katy was again a prey to one of the married sisters; while his wife and her niece stayed on in the fast-emptying sea-side town.

Mrs. Dent could see as far as most people, and she knew that Sir Denis was in love with Beryl days before the baronet dreamed of his own secret; but she was a wise woman, and held her tongue.

She was even thankful when her husband and "the girls" left Broadgate, because she dreaded lest a word of good-natured raillery from them should blight the romance she took so much delight in before it had blossomed from a bud into a flower.

"I never saw Beryl seem so taken with anyone before," she told herself; "and she can't suspect Sir Denis of being heartless or mercenary, seeing he risked his life for her before he ever knew her name, much less that she was an heiress. I like him, too, he's got a quiet masterful way with him, in spite of his pleasant temper and sunny smile, he'd rouse Beryl from her day dreams and make her take her proper place in the world if she married him."

"It would be a good thing for her; she'll never take to one of our men." By which she meant the prosperous, portly, City men and their complacent sons, who from time to time dined solemnly at the Oaks, "and it'll go to my heart, it will, if Beryl grows into an old maid. Then I'd like to be able to speak of 'my niece Lady Adair.'"

"Poor father worshipped a title, that he did. He could never think enough of Kathleen just because she was an Honourable, and he'd feel it a credit to the family for one of his grandchildren to be 'my Lady.'"

So Sir Denis was not likely to meet with any opposition from Beryl's guardians, and from the way the girl blushed and changed colour at his approach one would have augured he had not much cause to fear rejection from herself.

Mrs. Dent had wondered privately, more than once, when he would "speak out" before the Baronet awoke to the knowledge that he was in love.

And it came about in this wise. They had driven over to Weston in a wagonette, Mrs. Lorton going with them to make a fourth, and

be companionable to Beryl's aunt. They put up the horses and had tea in the hotel garden; then while the elder ladies rested under the shade of a spreading chestnut tree Beryl and Sir Denis went down to the sands to secure a specimen of some remarkable sea-weed for which the little place was famed.

Strange as it may seem, considering their intimacy and the frequency of their meetings, Beryl and Sir Denis had never stood on the sea shore together since the night of their first meeting. At first her sprained foot had forbidden much walking exercise, and afterwards she seemed to have lost the habit of walking by the shore.

It was low tide. The sweet September sunshine was dancing on the distant waves. Beryl sat down on a rock which the receding water had left bare, and gazed wistfully out to sea.

"I thought I could never bear to look at it again," she said wistfully, "but it does not look cruel now."

"It looks like the face of an old friend," said Sir Denis. "Miss Beryl, I shall always think of you when I look at the sea."

"I am glad we came down here. I wanted to get used to looking at the sea from the sands again. Do you know that at first I was frightened?"

"I don't wonder."

"I am not a coward, really, you know, only that night was so terrible, and—somehow I never can forget it quite."

She looked so beautiful as she sat there, with the sunlight falling on her chestnut hair and turning it to tresses of gold; her eyes were so charming in their expression of wistful inquiry that a great longing came over Sir Denis to take her in his arms, and beg her to be his own for ever. Yes, he knew the truth now. He loved this girl of the people, this poor niece of a City man, as he would never love again.

In the years to come for the sake of his home and his grand old name he might marry an aristocratic heiress whose fortune would repair the breaches in his property, and help him to restore the glories of Heron Dyke, but never—while life lasted—would he care for another as he cared now for this violet-eyed girl whom he had held in his arms and strained to his heart when Death seemed near.

"I am going away."

It was not what he had meant to say; indeed, the resolution was newly formed, but the words came straight from his heart.

It was all he could do for Beryl to go away; he dared not marry her, his five or six hundred a year would not support a wife as Lady Adair should be kept, or even in the modest comfort which he believed was all the Dents enjoyed.

He could go away and leave her before she guessed his love or learned to love him back again; it was all he could do for his darling, and it should be done.

"Going away!" The girl repeated the words in a strange far-off tone, as though she hardly realized their meaning, then—perhaps, as the truth came home to her, she added, "we shall miss you."

"Thank you, very much. I need not tell you the 'missing' will be mutual; I am a very lonely man, Miss Beryl, without any near relations or home ties, and the kindness I have received from your relations has been very precious to me. Will you think of me sometimes when I am far away?"

It was desirable she should forget him; but somehow Denis Adair could not bear the thought of that; he was too poor to marry her, so he was going away (he really thought it was very generous of him), but surely she might think of him as a friend.

"I shall never forget you," answered Beryl. "They will tell you at home I am not good at forgetting," then, for the pause was full of pain to her, she asked, "are you going home?"

"To Heron Dyke?" a little surprised at the question. "No, I am going back to London; it will be October next week, and people will begin returning to the great Babylon."

"We are going back next week, but our Lon-

don is a very different place from yours. We are not likely to meet."

"Who knows?"

"I might have seen you in your London this summer," said Beryl; "wouldn't it have been odd? I have an aunt who lives near Park Lane and goes out a great deal; she asked me to spend May and June with her—and I wouldn't."

"You actually refused a season in Park Lane? You must be more than mortal."

"I'm what the girls call 'odd.' Aunt Julia did all she possibly could to make me go, but I wouldn't. I offered to leave the Oaks if she were tired of me, but I positively refused to accept Lady Lester's invitation."

"Lady Lester! Do you know her? Is she your aunt?"

"My mother's only sister—yes. I know her, I spent a month with her once—and I hate her."

"You hate so many people," said Denis in a tone so caressing as to take away the sting of the reproach. "It's a bad habit of yours, Miss Beryl. Now I think Lady Lester very agreeable."

"She may be—to you."

And Denis took up the fancy that Lady Lester had alighted Beryl as a poor relation; he changed the subject abruptly. He and Beryl spent a very pleasant half hour by the sea; good Mrs. Dent decided that Sir Denis would surely "speak out" to-day, but when the young people rejoined the elders there was no little confession made; Beryl had no blushes, Sir Denis no proud air of proprietorship.

The four drove back quietly, almost silently, and when they reached Aubrey-square he declined the invitation to dinner.

Looking into Beryl's room a little later Mrs. Dent found her in an agony of tears; she closed the door noiselessly and went away wondering what was wrong.

"She can't have refused him," reflected Aunt Julia; "he didn't look as if he'd been rejected; besides, I don't often make a mistake, and I'm certain Beryl loves him."

(To be continued.)

STRAYED AWAY.

CHAPTER XLVII.

MEN AS THEY ARE.

ARTHUR did not reply immediately to that inquiry. He could not meet the wistful gaze and quench the pleasure in its expectancy by telling the truth.

"Mr. Falkland is to be pitied, in a measure," he said, at length, "as he was, to some extent, the victim of a misapprehension. Beyond this, my dear Miss Millard, you had better not question me."

"Has he done anything so very serious, then?"

"It is his duty to give you a full explanation, and you had better be satisfied with what your father says. He is the best judge of what to tell you, and what to conceal."

Miss Millard bowed to that gravely spoken counsel. She was impressed with the belief that Arthur had come with the purest motive, but she was still inclined to measure Percy's fault with the lenience of love, no matter what his faults might be.

"This gentleman would be very strict even with the slightest fault," she thought; "and perhaps Percy has done something that men like papa and Mr. Wilson condemn—but it may not be very dreadful after all."

And thinking so she would have carried her project into execution—gone to London that morning—had not Mrs. Millard chosen that day for a visit to the Crystal Palace, and requested Adelaide's company. It saved her from danger for a day, at least, and gave her time to reflect.

Arthur went to town with Mr. Millard. The speculating stock-jobber sustained his cordiality of tone, and invited Wilson down to a second little dinner for the following day. He reasoned

eagerly enough that the best way to teach Adelaide to forget Percy was to keep her attention diverted, and there could be no better diversion than the society of a young and handsome gentleman.

"The more Adela thinks of Wilson, the less she will think of that wretched fellow," said Millard to himself; "and it will not be a bad thing for me to be well in with a responsible man in such a house as Wilson is in."

In his solicitude for his daughter Millard did not forget himself. With Arthur Wilson for a son-in-law he felt that he would have a useful aid in the arranging of certain financial matters that hedged him in at times.

"Falkland is a thorough rascal," he said, as they rode up, "and I am afraid there are too many like him."

"Yes," assented Arthur; "I am afraid he is the average man of the day, and it is an age that gives us petty profligates in youth and cynics in early manhood. Pure sentiment is sneered down, good morality laughed out of fashion. One of the worst signs of the times is that men have faith in their own virtue, and when they yield to temptation lay the fault on human nature."

"In what do you think does the cause of this exist?"

"It is so difficult to say. The son is a reflex of the father, and the sons hear the father's talking of early days, that have not been too respectable or pure. Take the tone of society in general, and see what it is. Get together a company of men of all ages, and listen to their conversation. Should it turn upon religion, it is in doubt of religion; and should it be of female purity, it is in doubt of female purity. Each man believes his own wife and daughters to be above suspicion, and yet he speaks of the world of women in general as a world in which honour is a principle sustained by fear, and not by instinctive virtue. At home he condemns the vices that abroad he falls into."

"There is some truth in that, Mr. Wilson."

"Too much, Mr. Millard. If men carried the spirit of their belief home themselves they would doubt the mothers who gave them birth—the children who love them. They say the age is vicious, except it as a fact, and then help to strengthen the fact by choosing rather to drift with the tide of vice than attempt to stem the torrent. The respectable middle age of the period is very frequently but a mask over the sinful memories of youth."

"And you blame the men entirely."

"Entirely and without reserve. For a man to say that a woman tempted him is to imitate the ferocious cowardice of the wolf to whom the lamb is a passive sacrifice. In the passionate innocence of youth a girl may need to be saved even from herself, and then it is man's duty to be the protector—not the destroyer."

"You have lived a good life, Mr. Wilson."

"I trust so. Love for my mother made me reverence her sex. In an ordinary company of men I could not admit that simple truth without being laughed at in derision."

Mr. Millard thought of his sons and sighed. He asked himself whether he had done his duty by them.

He had been accustomed to be content with the idea that they were no worse than others; and being no worse than others they were going rapidly on the road that would make their respectable middle age a mere mask for the sinful follies of youth.

They shared the laxity of moral feeling that is a degradation to manhood and an insult to the gender sex.

"It is the custom to shirk these truths," said Arthur, while Millard was thinking seriously; "deny their existence tacitly, taboo them as forbidden subjects, and we suffer for the hypocrisy when the evil comes direct home to our door."

"But where is the remedy?"

"With mankind. Let men live purely, and the world will be pure."

"I fear the remedy is Utopian," said Mr. Millard. "Men are not saints."

"They need not be. Let them be only just to

women and honest to each other—let them simply do their duty."

"I fear, Mr. Wilson, we shall not make the world better by individual reform."

"Individual reform is precisely what we require. The man who waits for the world to reform does not assist its reformation."

"Our social system is undoubtedly defective," said Mr. Millard. "See, in my own case. There is no punishment for the scoundrel who came into my house and won my daughter's love. Had he married her we could have punished him for bigamy; but what restitution would there be for me. If I caught a common thief prowling about my premises I could punish him for the intent to steal. This man trifles with my child—steals her affection, and perhaps breaks her heart, and because the crime is not fully carried out he escapes."

The train stopped as Millard ended that comment on our social ethics, and the two gentlemen parted outside the station.

"To-morrow at five," said Millard, "and bring Mrs. Wilson with you. The lady who has trained you into what you are is very welcome in my house."

Arthur sent a messenger from the bank to Paxton-street with a brief note apprising Mrs. Wilson of his safety, and the cause of his absence. He would not let her endure an hour's unnecessary anxiety.

The widow heard the account of his visit at tea-time, and she did not fail to notice the unconscious interest with which he spoke of Adelaide.

Since he had been instrumental in saving Miss Millard his attention was not so entirely devoted to Fanny—not that his regard lessened. Arthur's affection and friendship were alike faithful.

"You will like Miss Millard," he said; "she resembles Frances in many things. There is the same gentle faith of nature—the same tenderness of tone. How is it, mother, that bad men are loved the best?"

"They are not loved the best," was the reply.

"It is that a woman's love is tested more by them, and the powerful strength of its devotion is brought out. A good man is priceless to a woman's heart; her fervent faith for him is greater, though its fervour is unspoken. We cling to bad men with the strength of pain; to the good with the power of pleasure. It is not that we are less fond of good, but we are more happy, and our happiness is quieter."

Arthur thanked her for the explanation. Even he had begun to feel some envy of the selfish fellow who was loved so well by two true and noble women.

"Yet," he said, "it does seem strange."

"Not so, Arthur. The cause is simple. If I had a second son, and he were like Mr. Falkland, I might seem more fond of him, because I should be more demonstrative in the hope of winning him back to redemption; but I could not care for him as I do for you—with a love that is full of perfect peace—with a love that never knew a pang."

"Always right, my mother," he said, kissing her with something of the old gladness. Then he sighed. "Have you invited Frances to come and see us?"

"No, Arthur."

"Will you?"

"Not yet. When she comes it must be with her husband."

"And do you think that will ever be?"

"I hope so, and believe so—when the fiery crucible of suffering has tried and proved them both."

"And Frances has suffered," he said, sadly.

"Poor girl!"

"You love her still."

"I always shall; simply and purely, as I always have. If a man can feel pure friendship for a man surely he can feel a truer and gentler friendship for a girl. Women are given to us to love, and cherish, and protect. The man who cannot do so purely is a breaker of his trust—something less than human—in no part divine. To say that I cannot love Frances with purity is to class me with the boyish cynic or the battered world-worn roué."

"And there are too many such."

"Too many; but the world is not quite full of them. The true chivalrous spirit of manhood will never die, however much the vice and vanity of the age may beset it."

"If there were more men like you, my son!"

"There are. The trace of Eden is never quite stamped out. There is no man who cannot be redeemed if a woman takes the trouble to redeem him."

"Mr. Falkland?"

"Even he. The end is not come yet; Frances will be happy; her patient faith cannot go for ever unrequited."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

OUT OF WORK.

MR. FALKLAND the elder was seriously inconvenienced and as seriously troubled by Percy's absence. He heard of Percy now and then, but he heard no good of him. The young man was living a life of feverish dissipation, drowning disappointment and good sense together.

The builder had to send an engineer in Percy's place to finish the railway contract in Germany, and he lost considerably by it. He lost prestige by Percy's breach of faith; and other contracts that would have fallen to him were given elsewhere.

"And it is all through the West people," said the builder, savagely. "Percy's prospects are ruined for ever, and he may never return again."

When he found that there was no possibility of severing the tie between Fanny and his son the builder took a dislike to all her family. He was barely civil to old Bill West, and the boy who was in the yard with him he never deigned to notice.

It troubled the carpenter. He was a workman of the old school, and stood in awe of his master. Trades' unions and co-operation were in their infancy then, and the masters had it nearly all their own way.

Old Bill had been brought up to believe that labour was the only right of labour, and that it was his duty to take what he could get and be thankful.

The simple-hearted man felt that it was he who had wronged the Falklands rather than that the Falklands had wronged him. He did not know his power. Fanny still concealed the truth. When West saw Falkland looking at him, as he would look at times in moody anger, the carpenter would think,—

"It's that sixty pound a year he don't like, and we don't want it. I dare say he pays it with a grudge."

But it was worse even than that, as was proved one Saturday morning, when Falkland called West into the counting-house. West was inspired with the conviction that something unpleasant was about to happen.

"West," said Falkland, in the tone of a man who had made up his mind to do what his conscience told him was an injustice, "you have been a long time in my employment."

"Yes, sir; four-and-thirty years—going on for five-and-thirty."

"And you have always served me well. I am sorry to have to part with you, West, but I find it unpleasant to have you here. Here is a fortnight's money for you, and a fortnight's for your son James. Your services will not be required after to-day."

"No, sir—just so, sir," said poor old Bill, nearly stunned by the shock. "I dare say it can't be pleasant to look at me when you think of what's happened. But then, you see, sir, I've a large family, and after being four-and-thirty years in one situation it's hard to get another. Taint been pleasant for me, being here; but I've had to stand it for the sake of those at home."

"We will not discuss the matter, West. You are a good workman, and at this season of the year there is plenty of work to be had. I suppose you know the whole truth by this time. Your daughter has been my son's ruin, caused him to leave me in anger, and he is going to the bad for a misplaced affection."

"I thought all along it was t'other way," said

Mr. West, simply; "but people have such different ways of looking at things."

"You have my best wishes," the builder went on, not choosing to notice the remark; "and, little as your daughter deserves such kindness, the allowance will be continued."

"It was wrong of her to go from home," said West, inferring that Falkland was blaming Fanny for her supposed weakness; "but, then, she was very fond of Master Percy. He was a baby in his cradle in this old house here in the yard when I first saw him, and I never thought he would bring me to sorrow; but I have forgiven him, so has Fanny—so there's an end of that."

The builder was puzzled. Was it possible, he asked himself, that West was still in ignorance of the marriage?

"I had better not inquire," he reflected. "If he is, he had better remain so."

"You will distinctly understand," Falkland said, in conclusion, "that all future intercourse between your daughter and my son is forbidden. Should he ever visit or acknowledge her without my sanction the allowance will be withdrawn."

"We have had too much trouble to get her home to let her go again," said West. "Never you fear, sir. Keep Mr. Percy away from our place, and I'll keep my girl away from yours."

He put his own money in his pocket, carried James's in his hand, and returned to the yard. He shouldered his basket with a sigh.

"Come, Jim," he said to his son, now grown into a fine manly fellow, more advanced in education and independence than his father, "say good-bye to your mates. Here's your money."

"How's that, father?"

Several of the men heard what West said, and gathered round in wonder.

"Don't matter about the 'how,' my boy; we're discharged—that's the whole of it."

James West crimsoned with indignation, and cast an angry glance at the counting-house. He partly suspected the cause of their dismissal, and he was old enough now to feel the wrong that had been done.

"Well, that is hard!" exclaimed one of the men—and he spoke the opinions of the rest. "After four-and-thirty years too! Why you can do as good a day's work as you ever did!"

"Yes; but it's not that," said West, with emotion. "You can guess, mates, pretty near as well as I can tell you what it's for. People that have done wrong don't care to be kept in mind of it, specially if they can afford to keep it out of sight."

West had the sympathy of every man present for the story of the workman's daughter and the master's son had leaked out, and Percy was held in no favour there.

James West and his father went home side by side, and neither spoke much. Jim did not care a jot for his discharge; he was a quick and clever artisan, and work was to be got in London just then; but he felt the injustice to his father.

"Falkland's had all the work out of the old man," he said to himself, "and now he's turned him out. It shall go hard if I don't manage to be even with them yet. They think I don't know much at home, and they think I don't take notice; but I know there's a score to settle up with Mr. Percy on Fanny's account, and I'll pay it if I ever get the chance."

Ten was ready in the pretty parlour in Camberwell when the carpenter and his son reached home.

The younger children—healthier for the change of air, cleaner and neater for Fanny's presence—were at play in the garden.

Young Bill was there, with yet half an hour to spare before he went to the fire-escape station. He was nursing Fanny's baby, and listening with wondering pleasure to Fanny's skill on the piano, for they had a piano—a good one in its way—picked up at a sale for twelve pounds; and when properly tuned, repaired, and polished, it gave the parlour quite an air of grandeur.

Mr. West went into the back parlour to his wife, and found the little woman busy at the

ironing-board, taking extra pains over the front of his best white shirt for Sunday.

He put his arm, with its rough coat-sleeve, round her neck, and kissed her as he had never failed to do since the first day of their marriage.

"Well, father," said the little woman cheerily. "I am a little late; but I'll be ready for tea by the time you've washed yourself and put your coat on."

"No hurry, mother."

The quiet sadness in his tone surprised her.

"Anything the matter, William?"

"Not much; only I shall have to look out for work."

"At this time of the year?"

Mrs. West knew, as well as her husband did, that it was the wrong season to be out of employment.

"Yes. It isn't that there is no work; but Falkland don't want me nor Jim any longer. You can tell why. But we needn't say a word to Fanny; it will only trouble her, and I fancy she is getting a little happier lately."

West was glad to see that his faithful partner bore the new trouble so bravely. The face, slightly worn with care, and calm with that patient, contented quietude so often seen upon the face of a steady poor man's wife, was downcast for a moment, and then she said,—

"Well, father, I dare say we shall get on just as well—we have a little money by us, and the boys are all in place—even if you are out for a month or so. A rest will do you good. We are better off than many people."

It lifted a great load from West's mind to have the trouble met in that way. His wife was a help-mate in the proper sense of the word—a cheerful, industrious little woman, who rarely complained, and never met troubles half way.

"Yes," he said, again, "we are better off than most people, mother. If I can stick to work ten years longer we shall not have to come to the parish for help. We've got good boys, for one thing; and we shouldn't be quite a burden to them, for another. But it's hard of Falkland."

"Why did he do it?"

"He didn't like to see me there; that's what it was. It made him feel ashamed of Master Percy, seeing me there; and I think there's been a quarrel between them about Fanny. But we must not tell her so."

The carpenter did not tell his wife all he feared. He knew, by what he had seen of others, how hard it was for a man of his years to get work when so many young and able hands were in the market.

After four-and-thirty years of faithful service he had naturally looked forward to remaining at Falkland's yard to the end of his working days, and he had built up a pleasant prospect for his future.

He had married young, and his children had grown up round him while he was yet able to help himself.

Three of them—young Bill, James, and Bob—were earning good wages, and the fourth—Andy—had been promoted from shop-boy to light porter at the tailor's where he worked.

Fanny was provided for, and they had rather more than three hundred pounds laid by in the savings-bank.

Then West was an old-established member of a sick fund and friendly society, and, now that the expenses of bringing up a family were over, he looked forward to making a tolerable addition to his savings in the next ten years.

That was reckoning that he could work till he was sixty years old. He was quite content if he could pass the rest of his days in peace, have his pipe in the chimney corner, and see his grandchildren grow up round him.

But the unexpected dismissal from Falkland's overthrew his plans. He had looked upon his situation there as a certainty.

"If it comes to the worst," he said, "and I find that the masters think me too old, I can put a board in front of the house, and take jobbing carpentering. We've got our children round us, mother, and Fanny is with us once more."

There was peace in that small household, and the rich man in his villa at Pease was less happy than the poor one in the Camberwell cottage. Fanny thought her father looked tired, and told him so, but he answered,—

"No, my pet; but it's Saturday, and the weather's warm; and somehow I always do feel more tired on Saturday than other days. I suppose it's because the week's work's done, and I feel that I can take a rest on the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a blessing to poor men, if only for the rest it gives them."

CHAPTER XLIX.

ON THE BRINK.

THEY did not tell Fanny what had happened. She had seemed happier lately, and they would not let the shadow of their trouble mar the peace of mind that was apparently returning.

In their simplicity the carpenter and his wife thought that their daughter was teaching herself to forget the man who had discarded her; but her quiet was the coming tranquillity grown of faith that in time Percy would return to her.

Unhappily, that tranquillity was destined to be short lived.

The letter, written by Percy in his selfish anger after Mrs. Wilson's visit and the quarrel with his father, reached her early in the week.

It was addressed to Miss West, and the address was in itself an insult, coming, as it did, from the man who had married her.

But she recognized the familiar handwriting, and took it with a tremor from her little sister, who had run to answer the postman.

The name on the envelope told Fanny how sternly Percy adhered to his determination of discarding her; but hope would cling, and she was not prepared for the cruel contents.

Her eyes swam as she read. Each deliberate word must have been intended to strike her; it despaired, for each word went to her soul.

"My love for you has been the bitter lesson of my life," she read—"my ruin. I could have endured everything had you been true. It is hard to think I have sacrificed parents, home and kindred, wealth and position, for a woman who had not even the common virtue of faithfulness."

Though every word was full of intense bitterness, Fanny still read on.

"It is the keenest punishment of my folly that, no wonder how far apart we may be, I am fettered to you by a tie that nothing but death can sever—a tie that will make me an outcast and drag me down to misery. Think of it, and be happy, if you can. I have no hope in the world."

Fanny read no more. She put her hand to her head and tried to think.

Her thoughts were in a whirl—her eyes swam over the next few lines, and she took in their meaning indistinctly.

"I shall have left England before this reaches you, and you will never see or hear from me again."

He was going away, Fanny said to herself. He had quarrelled with his father, and was going away—an outcast, and through her.

That was the meaning of his letter, and her full comprehension of its meaning broke from her in an anguished cry.

"He wants me out of the way. I have lived for Percy to wish me dead. He does not even mention baby."

Then she wept—the bitterest tears she had ever wept; and no one heard a sound, or saw a sign of her sorrow.

Her mother was downstairs busy with the household work. The children were playing, and baby slept, smiling in his sleep, while Fanny buried her face in the pillow of her bed, and tried to sob away her heartache.

She could not forget those terrible words—"I am fettered to you by a tie that nothing but death can sever—a tie that will make me an outcast, and drag me down to misery."

Fanny sobbed till she was exhausted, and then a tearless agony succeeded.

She took her child from the cradle, and lay down with the little one folded in her arms—gazing at it with her mournful eyes, pressing it

to her as if the little life, with its infant love, could absorb her pain. It was hard to think the father of that pretty baby wished her dead.

The poor girl tried to sleep, but her brain seemed strangely troubled. Her thoughts grew incoherent, and the most striking scenes of her life were blended in a chaotic waking dream.

She suffered with a weary recollection of joy at the remembrance of the happy day at Richmond when Percy, with his handsome face full of adoring passion, talked tender sentiment to her, and knelt at her feet, grateful if he might only kiss her hand.

Then her happier days, when she was his young wife, and he taught her music; cultivated her mind, read tender poetry to her, and was more the lover since he had been the husband.

She could scarcely associate him with the stern and fiercely angry man who confronted her with a tempest of bitter wrath in the shabby room in Maple street.

"I have ruined him," she thought; "made him poor, and driven him from home, and he will never forgive me. I have been the bane of his life. I who loved him so!"

Then in the middle of her despair an insidious whispering filled her soul, tempting her to make the sacrifice he seemed to desire. She slid from the bed, leaving her baby sleeping, opened her writing-case, and, with her face whiter than stone, sat down to write.

Only a few sad words to her father and mother, asking them to pray for her and forgive her, and take care of baby.

"I know you will grieve for me," she wrote; "but I am so unhappy that I cannot live any longer. Mr. Falkland wants me out of the way, and he shall have his wish. May Heaven pardon him! Perhaps he will be kinder to our child when I am gone."

This she folded and placed on her dressing-table; then she put on her bonnet and mantle and lingered, hesitating whether to take the child with her or not; but a merciful remembrance came to her.

Old Bill West was so fond of the little fellow that its loss would have broken him down. Had it not been for that remembrance Fanny would have taken the child out to die with her.

She went alone; left the agony of an age in the last kiss pressed on baby's lips, and stole down stairs quietly, so as not to disturb her mother.

Fanny did not shut the street door, only drew it close, that it might not make a noise. She let her veil fall; it was early evening yet, and she was conscious that the passers-by would be startled by the pallor of her face if they saw it.

Mrs. West, going upstairs ten minutes later, saw baby alone, and did not notice the note on the dressing-table. The little woman missed Fanny's bonnet and mantle from their accustomed places, and knew that Fanny had gone out then.

"Dearie me!" she said, going downstairs, "she has run out for something, and left the street door open; so she won't be long—she has not gone far."

Not very far. Fanny had taken one of the shortest roads to eternity. She went to Waterloo-bridge, and lingered there some time, but saw no chance of accomplishing her purpose.

There were too many people about, and she shrank from the thought of being taken out of the water half drowned, and charged at the police-court with attempting to commit suicide. Even the fatally false self-abnegation that leads to death is robbed of its romance in these days.

The minutes grew into an hour, and still Fanny lingered, watching the sluggish waters lap into the slime on the banks, and heave sullenly against the arches of the bridge. Here was not the frantic desperation that prompted a leap from the bridge—she wanted to die quietly.

At last she became conscious that a strangeness in her manner had attracted the attention of a policeman, and then she moved away—wandered about for hours—towards Islington, with the vague idea of looking once more at the places pleasantly familiar to her in the Paxton-street days. Then back, towards Knightsbridge, with a thought that she might see Emily White, and speak a last word to her. Then, changing

her mind, and returning to her purpose, back towards the river.

It was midnight when Fanny, tired of foot and weary-hearted, turned the corner of Parliament-street, the great bell in the clock tower was striking the hour, and the light was fading from the huge white dial.

Fanny reached the foot of the bridge, and crept down the steps. She stood on the last one, with Percy's cruel letter crushed in her hand and feeling like lead.

She gazed at the sombre night sky, and her face was a mute prayer for forgiveness. She was faint and sick and weary, and could not speak.

The sluggish tide rolled to her feet, and went back in sullen darkness, while she still lingered on the brink.

CHAPTER I.

IN PERIL.

ON the day before that wretched evening when poor Fanny went out to make the fatal sacrifice to her lost love Arthur Wilson and his mother travelled down to Penge. The doctor's widow had accepted the invitation with a degree of pleasure, for she wanted to see the lady of whom her son had said so much.

"It may be the turning point of his life," she thought. "It may cure him entirely of the infatuation that has held him so long. It was good that he met Miss Millard under these circumstances. They have given him a special interest in her, when but for them she would have been but an ordinary woman, and an ordinary woman could never reach his heart."

The doctor's widow fixed her son at a high standard. She whose life had been happy with her husband—she who had been a help and not a fetter to him, knew how difficult it was to find a woman true to her instincts and her duty.

Experience had taught her what a wife should be, and she wanted the girl whom Arthur chose to be such a wife as she had been.

Arthur, little as he thought of dress in general, felt proud of his mother as he put her shawl on. Mrs. Wilson's noble beauty had not faded. She wore a dress of plain black velvet, and it suited her stately style.

"I think you will say with me that Adelaide Millard is like our Frances," he said. "I hope you will."

"Our Frances, Arthur?"

"I think of her in that way, and I always shall."

"If you were married?"

"My wife would not be jealous. She would know me too well."

Mrs. Wilson did not argue with him. Her hope was that the dream would fade by degrees—give place to a reality in the shape of the lady he liked for her resemblance to the one he could not forget.

That Fanny was ever in his thoughts was evident even now, for he said,—

"I wish you would go and see her, mother. We do not know what may have happened since you were there. Frances is very fond of you, and if we cannot help her to happiness your sympathy will give her strength to bear her trouble."

"I will see her," said Mrs. Wilson, thinking it best to assent so far.

"When?"

"Within the next few days."

"Why not to-morrow? You may hear whether anything has taken place."

"I will write to her to-morrow, and promise her a visit the next day. Will that content you?"

"Yes," he said, gratefully, "that will do. You see, I feel myself the cause of the estrangement. I would go to Mr. Falkland if I knew where to find him."

"Not yet," said Mrs. Wilson.

And thus it ended for the time.

Arthur went down to Penge with a pleasant feeling at his heart, for he felt that he would be welcome to Adelaide. He had saved her from Percy, he was sure of that, and Arthur looked

upon it as his especial mission to be a woman's true and faithful guardian.

He was disappointed, however, in Miss Millard's treatment of him. There was a restraint that he mistook for coldness in her manner. There was something on her mind, and it made her seem wanting in cordiality.

Arthur was pained more for her sake than his own.

He took her pensive quiet as a sign that she still clung to the man, who, but for him, might have wrecked her happiness.

"Adelaide has not got over it yet," said Mr. Millard to his guest, when they strolled in the long garden with a cigar after dinner. "I am half afraid that the fellow still keeps up a correspondence with her; but I think it best to watch her closely, and say nothing."

"Yes, it is best. Every word upon the subject only brings a remembrance that had better be left to die out of itself."

When the two gentlemen returned to the drawing-room much of Adelaide's restraint had worn away, and she was talking freely with Mrs. Wilson. The doctor's widow had an irresistible way of winning confidence.

The junior Millards were there, slightly in awe of Arthur's stately mother. They were sadly out of their atmosphere in the society of ladies, and they were uncomfortable between a secret longing for the billiard-room, and a conviction that for once their father intended them to remain in the room like gentlemen.

Mrs. Wilson kindly tried to put them at ease. She pitied them; she saw that their hearts were sound enough; only the heads were affected.

They made an attempt to be congenial, and, having no better taste, let off small satires at ladies' dress, referring to Arthur whether he did not think it absurd.

But Mr. Wilson had the happy faculty of giving consideration to trifles, and he took the matter in a different light.

"Fancy, if a fellow marries," said Sydney Millard, "he would want the income of a juvenile Rothschild to pay his wife's milliners' bills. Girls only live to dress."

"You take an exaggerated view," said Arthur. "Dress does occupy much, perhaps too much of a girl's attention; but it is while their time is idle—occupied only by themselves. It is different when they marry; life has a purpose for them then. They live for home, not for the world. The little extravagances are modified; they change with the change."

Sydney not being prepared with a reply shook his head, then presently burst out with,—

"It's their vanity, and they can't help it."

"There you mistake," said Arthur, coming to the charge with a smiling gravity that made young Millard wish he had not begun the discussion. "A woman's instincts are artistic, her love for the beautiful innate; and this artistic instinct is most easily gratified in the shape of dress, the blending of colour, the arrangement of drapery. A well-dressed woman is a picture for an artist to dwell upon with delight. She never does herself so much injustice as when she over-dresses. The picture is spoiled."

Sydney saw his chance then.

"Then there's a great many pictures spoiled."

"We must not condemn the many for the fault of the few. There are, I grant you, cases where women give way to the extravagance of fashion—leave themselves in the hands of a milliner, who is only a milliner, and not an artist. Then we have colour out of harmony—grace out of shape."

"Who is the best judge of a lady's dress?" asked Adelaide, glad to see her brother driven into a state of mystification by hearing a man defending what Sydney termed a woman's fondness for dress.

"The lady herself, when she is wise enough to be guided by herself. Her instinct tells her that she looks prettier sometimes than others, and the cause is the difference of colour and shape of dress. Fashion is simply fashion, and it should be art."

"That does not answer the charge of extravagance," said Sydney.

"Extravagance is not so general as you imagine."

The true lady is an economist in dress—the true lady is never too poor to dress well. Her taste is correct, and she is elegant at half the expense incurred by those who, wanting that taste, and putting themselves at the mercy of the milliner, spend endless money in vain attempts to outshine. They begin by trying to be beautiful, and end by being absurdly gorgeous.

"If you were married, would you let your wife spend as much money as she liked?"

"Most certainly. I should never attempt to control her inclination. She would know my income and what dress it would afford. I should leave it then to her good taste and common sense."

"But if it had been her habit to be extravagant she could not give it up."

"She would. The woman you marry is not the woman you have married."

"I do not take your meaning."

"You marry a girl set off at her best—dressed, perhaps, beyond her father's resources or position. No girl ever yet married well who did not expect to marry better, and when her fate comes—when love, giving her strength to look the truth in the face, gives her to a poorer man than she expected, out come the noble instincts of the woman, and she is content. Her longing for extravagance dies as the rich raiment—the relics of her girlhood—wears away. A woman need not always be in silk or velvet to be lovely. A true woman is always beautiful in her husband's sight, and that is enough for her."

"Well, Mr. Wilson," said Sydney, unconvinced, though with a coming sense that he was in the wrong, "when you marry I hope you will find it so."

"I shall. Men who do not find it so have themselves to blame."

"Queer fellow, that," said Sydney to his brother a little later. "Wants to make out that a girl's love of finery is artistic instinct. Bosh, ain't it?"

"I don't know. I think he thinks more about things in general than we do, and perhaps he was right. We spend an awful lot in dress, and spend a lot more one way and the other; and it strikes me somehow that our tailors are as bad as the girls' milliners, and we as stupid as the girls. We wear just what a tailor likes to give us."

"So we do."

"If we were to look through a seven years' collection of our own old clothes I don't think we should have much to say about the girls, Syd."

"Not with Mr. Wilson present, anyhow," said Sydney. "Let's have some billiards."

Though the subject was not on the surface one of deep interest the part Arthur had taken in it advanced him far in Adelaide's favour; it showed that he could be just to a woman, and merciful to her faults.

They stayed so late in conversation that the last train was gone before they rose to depart, and Millard pressed them to stay.

Mrs. Wilson had taken a great liking to Adelaide, and she stayed; judging wisely that in a day spent with her from morning till night in the midst of her own home she would see more of her true character than would be revealed in the course of fifty visits of ceremony.

The doctor's widow did see the same points of resemblance that had impressed Arthur; but they were points of disposition rather than of face or figure.

An expression now and then—a tone of voice that spoke the same depth of soul, a lifting or a drooping of the eye; a remark called up a smile that would have made Fanny smile; a thoughtful look when Fanny would have looked thoughtful—these made the resemblance.

Arthur looked at his mother as if to ask her opinion, and she smiled approval.

Mr. Millard and Mrs. Wilson grew confidential while Arthur and Adelaide sat out of hearing in a far distant corner of the large drawing-room.

"Yes," said Millard, speaking of Arthur and the part he had taken in proving Fanny's marriage to Percy Falkland, "he is the noblest fellow I ever met. A man of perfect honour and good sentiment, my dear madam. This

is no cant in him. He is what a young man should be. I would trust him with anything in my house."

Mrs. Wilson smiled.

"Even with your daughter?"

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure," he said, sincerely. "I would give a thousand pounds to see things going that way."

They exchanged a quiet shake of the hand as if a silent compact were made that instant.

"And it would be a sort of poetical justice," smiled the stockbroker; "for your son was disappointed in the lady you have mentioned, and Adelaide with Falkland—I should like to see it."

Arthur and Miss Millard, enjoying the beauty of the starlight, and a well-chosen conversation, were entirely unconscious of the arrangement made for their benefit, and whatever advantage Arthur might have gained was lost to him as yet, for Percy was yet in her mind. As Millard feared, they still corresponded—or rather Percy wrote to her, and she received his letters.

His last one was in her bosom now, and that last one had filled her with pain.

It had re-awakened, too, the desire to see him once more. Percy had ceased to write his long, despairing letters; he tried the effect of the brief and pathetic.

"And even you have turned against me, with the rest of the world," he wrote in his last. "I leave England to-morrow, with no hope, no word of farewell!"

That night when Adelaide read the lines in her bedroom her rash resolve strengthened, and she determined to go to him.

"I cannot let him go without a word—without a kiss!" she said. "He shall know that though we part for ever I still love him!"

CHAPTER LI.

NEARLY LOST.

It was Adelaide's custom to go for an early morning walk, and it was a custom to which she owed much of her freshness and beauty.

Penge is not a great way from London, yet the air is as pure there and the scenery as picturesque as if it were a hundred miles away from the great metropolis, instead of being so near that the distance between its rural prettiness and the City is only divided by about twenty minutes of railroad.

There were other young ladies in the district who, like herself, made early visits and received early visitors, so it was no matter of surprise when Miss Millard appeared at the breakfast-table in walking costume, and announced her intention of calling on a few of her friends.

"I may be more than an hour," she said, in a tone that implied she might not be gone much longer.

The girl could not utter a deliberate falsehood, and did not like to practice an equivocation; but her regard for Percy made her do so on the present occasion. "You will pardon me, my dear Mrs. Wilson—I have a call to make."

Under the glance of the doctor's widow's grave grey eyes, Adelaide coloured involuntarily, and went out to avoid a second look.

Something in the girl's manner made Mrs. Wilson suspect that all was not right, and she had an undefined fear that went towards the truth.

Ten minutes afterwards Arthur started to catch the train. It was arranged that his mother would stay for the day, and he was to return to fetch her in the evening. He would not neglect his business, and remain at Penge during the day.

Mr. Millard being in a comparatively independent position stayed late at home in honour of his guest.

The young Millards drove to town in a Newport Pagnall cart, with wonderful wheels, and a tall horse, whose pace and action would have tried the nerves of anyone but a horse-breaker or an idiot.

So Arthur, feeling rather alighted that he had

seen so little of Adelaide in the morning, walked to the station alone.

Mr. Millard's brougham had been offered to him but he declined it. Exercise was good for him, and he so rarely got the chance of a country walk that when he did get the chance he would not lose it.

He saw a lady some distance in advance of him and by her walk he recognized Miss Millard.

Her walk was exceptional in its beauty. Constant and regular exercise, and good habits, had given her a splendid grace and power.

She had none of the bodily indolence or feeble mental languor that, whether real or unreal, seems like affectation.

"Yes," said Arthur, for the hundredth time, "she is like Frances in the grace and dignity of motion—the proud carriage of the pretty head. I see the girl now as she is, free and unaffected, for she does not know that anyone is looking at her—and so her style is natural."

They were in a quiet country lane, and they were the only persons there. Most of the early morning travellers preferred a short cut across the fields to the station, and Arthur could watch the beautiful figure of the girl without interruption.

Like a true man he worshipped the divinity of mind, and, like a true man, he admired the beauty of her body.

Adelaide was deep in thought. He saw her take something from her bosom, and then her head was bent as if she were reading. He saw her press something to her lips, and a momentary faltering in her walk told him that she was touched by a strong emotion, and he thought, with some bitterness, that the letter she had kissed was from Percy; the emotion was evoked by her love for him him.

Miss Millard looked back, smitten with a sudden fear that she might have been seen; but a bend in the lane and a Hawthorn bush hid Arthur from her sight. He, however, could see her, and he saw something flutter to the ground.

It was the letter. She had mistaken a stiff fold in her silk dress for the pocket, and so dropped it.

Arthur picked the letter up. It was open, and the words were so few that he could not help reading them at a glance. Had they not have flashed at once upon his sight he would have folded the paper without looking at a syllable.

But that single glance told him the truth. Adelaide was going to the station—to her fate it might be. With such a man as Percy Falkland no fair and innocent woman was safe.

Arthur thought that, and the beating of his heart began to quicken. She was going to the station, he was sure; and the result proved that he was right. He stayed a little distance behind, so as not to be seen; but he measured time and distance so well that Adelaide was seated in her carriage when he reached the platform. He sprang into the first compartment he came to, and the train moved on as he did so.

When they arrived in London and left the train the splendid grace and power of her walk still pointed her out to him. Though she was in the midst of a throng he did not lose sight of her for an instant. She took a cab, and he took another, telling the driver of his to follow hers.

Percy had apartments near Eaton-square, and thither Miss Millard went. Arthur never losing sight of her, saw her enter a house, and his heart shook with agony at the thought of her peril—a girl in her innocence and loveliness placing herself at the mercy of an unprincipled man.

Only that he had the deepest faith in her he would have gone to the house and taken her away immediately. Once a painful doubt crossed his mind—Was it the first time she had been to see Mr. Falkland? The doubt was dismissed in a moment. There was nothing less pure than purity in Adelaide's sweet face.

Percy—going rapidly the downward way, sinking deeper into evil as he tried to drown remembrance—had his moments of reflection. He had hardened himself into a belief of Fanny's falsity, and his new passion for Miss Millard

made him seek self-extenuation by keeping up that belief. In his inmost soul he knew what he would not admit—that Fanny's fault was, at worst, an indiscretion, not a crime.

He would not think of her. He shut her from his mind, and when her image forced itself upon him he thought with bitterness of the fatal kiss he had heard.

He was right in thinking that it was a kiss given by Arthur and returned by Fanny. But she gave her kiss in pity—in pity for his deep love, in gratitude for his kindness; but it was as pure a kiss as ever sister gave a brother.

Falkland, whose life had been governed by no moral faith or religious feeling—he who had sought nothing but pleasure, no matter what the sacrifice and where the shame, turned sternly and in hard judgment from the girl whose error was such a slight one.

Sometimes he was touched by remorse—sometimes he longed to go to her with forgiveness, and see her countenance light up with more than beauty under the tenderness of his caress. But then the remembrance of that kiss would come, and with it the killing thought that she had loved another.

So the days wore on—remorse weakening, doubt strengthened; and all the while the passion for Miss Millard grew more irresistible.

"She will be happy with me," he would say when conscience troubled him, "in spite of the world, and I will be faithful to her."

He sent letter after letter, with the deliberate purpose of getting her into his power, and then tempting her to leave England with him.

He felt sure that if she came to him his pleading would prevail, and that rather than part for ever she would give up home, and friends, and kindred—trust everything to the honour which he had not.

And the poor girl came. He heard the cab stop, and then heard the timid voice inquire for him in the hall. He looked at himself in the glass, threw into his face the saddest expression he could give it, arranged his dressing-robe with its most graceful effect upon his handsome figure, and then sat down, leaning his forehead on his hand.

The servant tapped, and he said,—

"Come in," in a tone purposely given for Adelaide's ear.

"A lady to see you, sir," said the servant.

And he answered,—

"Let her come in." There was the same tone—the tone of one for whom the world had nothing left.

Miss Millard entered, pale, wistful, expectant; feeling that she had done wrong, yet impelled by her love to think she had done right. In a moment, and with a glad cry, he had clasped her in his arms.

"Adelaide, my darling! Oh! I knew you would come!"

He could not suppress the thrill of wicked exultation in his voice; but to Miss Millard's innocent ear it was a thrill of love, and she kissed him—her eyes full of tears while she kissed him—and never fell purer tokens of purer affection upon a baser traitor's lips.

"And now that we have met, we will not part," he said, seeking his advantage, while her heart was full of emotion. "You will come with me, Adela—you will not doubt me. You will trust to my love—my honour, in spite of the world, in spite of false friends—in spite of those who have wronged me!"

The poor girl could say nothing. The tenderness in his voice, the passion in his face, the closer grip of his arm overpowered her.

She did not know in what shape he had done wrong—why or wherefore he was in danger. She was away from home—with him alone, and, influenced by his presence only, the temptation was too powerful.

"In France," he said, "you shall be my wife; and till we reach there you shall be to me as sacred as a star. It is happiness enough if I may see you—kiss your hand—hear you speak. You will come, Adela—you will not leave me!"

The man was acting, but it was the acting of nature. He calculated the effect of every word, though every word came from the passion in his

soul; and when his eager glance sought her eyes for a reply, he read there an agony of emotion that told him he had triumphed.

She could not say "No," though she thought of home, of her mother, and, strange to say, of Arthur Wilson. She almost wished that someone would come to save her in this time of passionate trial. Yet there was a desire against that wish. To part for ever from Percy was to die.

Percy left her for a few minutes, returned dressed, stifled her appealing gaze with his lips, and led her down to the cab.

"To the railway station for Dover," he said. And on they went.

The true and faithful guardian was near. Fortunately for Arthur's purpose they were strangers to each other, so Percy had no knowledge of the grave young gentleman who stepped into a hansom at the end of the street just as he banded Adelaide in.

And they reached the station. Adelaide, faint from a conflict of emotion, did not lift her eyes, but clung to Percy's arm, feeling that this step once taken he was her world for evermore.

The tickets were procured by Percy, and the train was at the point of starting. He had her in the carriage with him—the door locked, and her head resting on his shoulder; the guard gave the signal, and Percy said to himself,—

"Mine, mine!"

And she was nearly lost. Arthur, blocked by a rush of passengers, could not get his ticket, nor break through the crowd. He heard the signal given for the train to start, and then he scattered the people right and left in his passage to the platform. He had not intended to let Percy go so far, but it was too late to prevent him now.

Arthur went without his ticket—the train was in motion; and the guard, just getting into his own van, said,—

"Too late, sir."

But Arthur caught the hand that would have closed the door, and sprang in after the guard.

"Never too late," he said. "It is a matter of more than life and death."

There was no time to expostulate with or turn him out. A sovereign satisfied the guard, and he procured a ticket for Arthur at the first station they stopped at. The train was an express—they were at Dover by mid-day.

Then, in front of the pier that ran down to the brink of the sea stood the mail packet, waiting for the passengers by that express, and Percy—his heart throbbing with sinful joy, was leading his victim to it, when a heavy hand fell on his shoulders, and a grave voice said,—

"Mr. Percy Falkland, I believe!"

He turned white with mingled fear and rage, looked at the grave and noble face, and then said fiercely,—

"No!"

Adelaide uttered a little cry, half of fear, half of joy. She had begun to feel her peril.

"Permit me to doubt you," was the cool reply, and Arthur, the stronger and the better of the two, drew Adela to him, and whirled Percy away with a quick force that sent him reeling. "I never struck a man in anger yet; but, on my soul, if you attempt to touch this poor innocent child I will strike you down!"

The tone was low, so low that it attracted no attention, but the eye was resolute, and the gentleman a picture of manhood. He had involuntarily thrown his arm round Adelaide's shoulders as if to shield her from the tempter, and she, very faint and trembling, clung to him, not knowing what to do, or what to say.

"I thought to spare you the bitter truth," said Arthur, very gently. "But, my poor girl, this man is married. Bear it bravely—look at him, and come back with me, and thank Heaven that I came in time!"

CHAPTER LII.

SAVED.

PERCY did not know the gentleman who spoke to him so quietly. Arthur had been careful not to mention his own name till he felt that Adelaide

was safe; and when he felt that she was safe, he said,—

"I am Arthur Wilson, Mr. Falkland; and I should like to have a few words with you."

Miss Millard admired him for his quiet manner. Percy hated him for being there; but he looked at Adelaide and found that she still remained with Arthur.

Percy noticed that from the moment Arthur said "This man is married," Adela did not even look at him.

The man felt it bitterly. He was disappointed in his passion—in his sinful love. He felt it the more bitterly when he learned the name of the gentleman who had come between him and the beautiful girl who might have been his victim.

He looked at Mr. Wilson, but the glance was returned with a sad and quiet dignity that put away his anger for the moment.

He felt saddened. He was not utterly bad, and, perhaps, in his secret heart, he was glad that the girl was saved from him. But then came the savage thought,—

"This is the man who kissed my wife in the passage. This is the man who took Frances from me. This is the man who takes Adelaide from me."

"Mr. Falkland," said the clear and temperate voice of Arthur Wilson, "there are some things I should like to explain if you will tell me when and where I may see you."

"When and where you please."

Arthur smiled.

"The matter is grave, and we must be dispassionate. The honour of a noble woman is involved—the honour of a good man is involved too."

"Who is the good man?" sneered Percy.

"Yourself, Mr. Falkland. I am patient with you, because I sympathise with you. I knew that, at the outset, when you married Fanny West you had good intentions, and I know that these intentions have, to some extent, been broken by me."

"Yes," said Percy sadly; "they have."

"When we return," said Arthur, touched by the tone, "I will explain everything; but at present my care is for this lady. Come back with me, or follow me. Here is my card, and you will know where to find me; but this poor girl must not be missed from her home."

It was in Percy's heart to quarrel with the gentleman who had taken possession of Miss Millard. Her hand was on his arm now. She clung to him, and would not look at Percy. Innocent as she was his rascality made her turn from him, and it made her grateful to the man who had saved her.

"Mr. Wilson," she said, lowly, "will you take me home?"

He smiled down upon her tenderly, ignoring Percy's presence.

"Do not fear, Miss Millard; the train returns within ten minutes. We shall be in London by three, at Penge by four; and your absence will not have been noticed."

"But the shame," said Adelaide, "I cannot tell a falsehood, Mr. Wilson; and what will they say when they know what I have done?"

"Let me tell your father the whole truth," he said, gently. "He may blame, but he will forgive. Come."

Then he turned to Percy.

"Mr. Falkland,"

"Sir."

"I am sorry for you. I am sure that you are sorry for your own badness. Why not do an act of grace? Return to the girl who has been true to you in spite of everything. Miss Millard will forgive you. I forgive you."

"You," said Percy, bitterly.

"I," said Arthur, with the quiet dignity that quite overpowered the other—"I pity you; for you are the victim of a misconception. There never lived a truer, nobler woman than your wife. Go back to her; acknowledge her; give her some recompense for her long time of suffering. Be a man in this case—be simply yourself. I am sure you are not so bad as even you would wish to seem."

Arthur could not have dealt with Percy in a better way had he tried. He spoke frankly,

freely, and with that quiet dignity that had its weight, in spite of Percy's dislike to him.

Percy felt that it was useless to contend with such a man. There was no violence in his bearing. He had told the truth, and by his bearing it was certain that he had told the truth. Percy knew it, and believed it in his soul, but he would not let himself be convinced.

"This man took Fanny from me," he thought. "This man has taken Adelaide from me, too. And she clings to him as though she had never cared for me."

Arthur and Miss Millard were moving away. Percy followed them. He could not go till he had tried his power once more.

"Adelaide!" he said.

There was no reply. She went on with Mr. Wilson—her face quite calm in its beauty, though it was very pale.

"For the last time," he said, still following, "speak to me, Adelaide. Don't believe him. Choose now—come with me, or we part for ever."

Arthur glanced at him over his shoulder. Miss Millard did not speak. Her head rested on Arthur's arm, and she knew that she had been saved.

The danger, strange to her innocence, was known to her fear. At the very worst she had not imagined Percy so bad as he was. The insult to her faith, the outrage to her love, crushed out both; and, though the pain was great, the woman, true to the beauty of a woman's nature, determined to forget him.

Mr. Wilson would not make a scene. His very quietude had quelled Percy, or the irregular temper would have broken out, and there would have been a quarrel that both must have been sorry for. Percy had courage, and had not conscience made a coward of him he would not have given Adelaide up so easily.

(To be continued.)

FACETIE.

EDITH: "So you prefer a long engagement. Well, I wouldn't." BLANCH: "If you liked theatres as well as I do, you would."

WIFE: "My first husband was a martyr to indigestion." SECOND HUSBAND: "Well, your second won't be. He has money enough to hire a cook."

"ROBBIE," said the visitor, kindly, "have you any little brothers and sisters?" "No," replied wee Robbie, solemnly, "I'm all the children we've got."

ARRIVING MISSIONARY: "May I ask what course you intend to take with me?" CANNIBAL KING: "The regular one. You'll follow the fish."

"I REALLY couldn't have refused Jack—he proposed so gracefully," said Kate. "No wonder! He has had lots of practice, you know," replied May.

FRIEND: "You don't mean to say you understand French, Tommy?" TOMMY: "Oh, yes, I do; for when pa and ma speak French at tea, I know I'm to have medicine."

STRANGER: "What's going on at this church, a wedding or a funeral?" BOY: "A wedding, I guess. A carriage full of old folks just arrived, and they all looked awful solemn."

"How many times are you going to pass by me before you bring me that beefsteak?" asked an indignant guest of a passing waiter. "Count them yourself, sir; I'm too busy."

SHE: "It can never be. All I can promise you is a mere acquaintanceship." HE: "Then accept my offer of marriage. It will drift into mere acquaintanceship fast enough."

"MOTHER doesn't think she'll go to the theatre with us to-night, Albery." "Well, well! I have three tickets. What shall we do with the third one?" "Give it to the man that you always go out to see between the acts. He can sit with us and you won't have to go out to see him."

SHE: "Isn't her nose quite retroussé!" HE: "I don't know. It is as turned up that you can't tell just what it is."

HE (approvingly): "You're a girl after my own heart." SHE (indignantly): "Sir! I'm after nothing of the sort!"

MUSICIAN (ironically): "I am afraid my music is disturbing the people who are talking over there." HOSTESS: "Dear me, I never thought of that. Don't play so loudly."

JABEE: "Your wife takes great interest in the woman question." BOB: "She does, sir; she is so much taken up with the rights of woman that she forgets men have any."

MISS DE THUMPER (after playing her favourite "piece"): "How do you like my new piano, professor?" PROFESSOR VON MUSK: "I do not know, miss. I never played on it."

GRYMES: "Why do you always go to that particular barber?" UKERDEK: "He is bald as an egg." GRYMES: "What of that?" UKERDEK: "He cannot advise me to use a hair restorer."

MRS. CHUGWATER: "What did the doctor say you'd better do for your cold, Josiah?" MR. CHUGWATER: "He told me to 'take a nightcap.'" MRS. CHUGWATER (greatly relieved): "Is that all? You can have one of mine."

EMANCIPATED WOMAN (1900): "I want a divorce." LAWYER: "What is the matter?" EMANCIPATED WOMAN: "In looking over my husband's papers, I find that he spells Woman with a small w."

LECTURER (sarcastically): "I will pause until the gentleman at the back of the hall stops whispering." STUDENT (cheerfully): "Please go on, sir; you are not bothering me in the least."

"Who are the two young ladies playing that duet upon the piano?" asked Mrs. Malaprop. "One is the daughter of the hostess," replied Herr Strawitzki. "And pray who is her accomplice?" asked Mrs. Malaprop.

"I AM sorry that your wife opened that business letter I sent you, Harris. You told me that she never opened your letters." "She doesn't as a rule, Wills, but, you see, you made a great mistake by marking it 'private!'"

WHIMBICES: "I always knew that thirteen was an unlucky number. Jolious gave an awfully swell dinner the other night, and there were just thirteen at table." FLIMBUS: "Well, what happened?" WHIMBICES: "What happened? Why, I wasn't invited!"

HE: "Mademoiselle, you are the star of the evening." YOUNG LADY: "You are the first to tell me so." "Then allow me to claim my reward as an astronomer." "What do you mean?" "That is to give my name to the discovered star."

TEACHER: "So you can't do a simple sum in arithmetic! Now, let me explain it to you. Suppose eight of you have together forty-eight apples, thirty-two peaches, and sixteen melons, what would each one of you get?" "Cholera morbus," replied Johnny.

MRS. DE BRUSH: "What a peculiar portière. What is it made of?" ATTENDANT: "That is made of fine Japanese rice strung on strings—only five shillings." "Better buy that, Louise. When the exchequer gets low, we can make a soup of the portière."

PAPA: "Where is your mamma?" LITTLE DAUGHTER: "I think she has gone to Mrs. De Fashion's four o'clock tea." "Did she say so?" "No, but I heard her say she wished Mrs. De Fashion was in Halifax, and she went out about five."

MRS. KINDLE (reading letter): "My goodness! Aunt Hetty, your great aunt, you know, is coming on a visit, and may be here any moment." DAUGHTER: "Yes, ma." "You are younger than I am, dear. Hurry up to the attic and bring down that green pasteboard box lying among the old clothes and things in the corner." "There are two green boxes there. Which do you want?" "Bring the one with those outlandish Christmas presents Aunt Hetty sent us, and put them on the parlour table."

"I TELL you I'd like to have a wife who could discuss questions of the day with me," remarked Hobbes. "Now, I suppose when you get home your wife never talks over the money question with you, does she?" "Doesn't talk over the money question!" cried Poorpurs. "You just ought to hear her when she wants a new hat."

THE OTHER DAY a teacher in a Burnley Board-school showed a little girl a picture of a fan, and asked her what it was. The little girl didn't appear to know. "What does your mother do to keep cool in hot weather?" asked the teacher. "Drink beer!" was the prompt reply of the little girl.

FOND MAMMA (showing the baby to visitor): "Sh—be's asleep. The little darling! Isn't he the sweetest you ever saw?" Visitor (in awe-struck whisper): "Decidedly. Can he talk?" Fond Mamma: "Talk? I should think he could talk! Why, he can say 'goo,' and 'ga,' and 'yow.' Picked them up himself, too."

MRS. WEARIE: "This is the last time I'll have a girl who can't speak English." HUSBAND: "Why don't you send her off?" MRS. WEARIE: "I've been trying to for six weeks, but I can't make her understand what the word 'discharge' means. She thinks it means a day off, and when I tell her she's discharged she goes out and has a good time."

LITTLE DICK: "I wanted to say something nice to Miss Antique, so I told her she didn't look her age; but I guess I did wrong, 'cause she got sort o' huffy. You go in and quiet her down a little, so she'll be in a good humour when mamma comes in." LITTLE DOT: "What shall I say?" LITTLE DICK: "Say she mustn't mind me, and tell her she does look her age."

MRS. NEWBICHE (patronisingly): "Were any of your ancestors men of note, Mr. Cynic?" MR. C.: "Yes, madam, I should say so. One of them was the most famous admiral of his day, and commanded the allied forces of the world." MRS. N. (with altered tone of deep respect): "Is it possible, Mr. C.? And what was his name?" "Noah, madam."

MR. STRAITLACE: "Well, Maude, I'm sure I don't know what to say about your going to the matinee. I'm afraid the influence of the theatre is demoralising." MAUDE: "It's a Western drama, pa—Dare-Devil Dave, the Terror of the Rockies—full of fights and gambling and murders." MR. STRAITLACE (reassured): "Oh, that's all right, then. I was afraid it might be an English society drama."

A BRADFORD lady, who knows more about the fashions than about literature, went recently into a bookseller's shop to purchase a present for her husband. She hovered round and manifested the usual indecision; whereupon the assistant in charge, to help her out of the difficulty, suggested a set of Shakespeares. The would-be purchaser met this proposal, however, with the prompt remark: "Oh, he read that when it first came out!"

YOUNG HUSBAND (who thinks of reforming): "Jennie, my dear, I know you have been silently grieved and pained for a long time on account of my absence from home at the club every evening. I am going to turn over a new leaf, and I'm going to begin to-night." YOUNG WIFE: "Oh, Edwin, you don't know how happy you have made me! Brother Jack wants me to go to the theatre with him to-night, and you can take care of the baby."

A JEWISH BANKER of a ludicrously Hebraic cast of countenance, while at Monte Carlo recently, struck up a great friendship with the Comte de L., the wittiest humpback in Paris. As the latter was about to return to the city on the Seine, in taking leave of the banker he expressed the pleasure he had found in his society, and hoped that whenever the banker was in Paris he would renew the acquaintance. "Delighted, my dear Count," exclaimed the flattered banker, "I should be charmed. But your friends in Paris have—er—rather unadvanced ideas. In fact I must acknowledge that I am a Jew." "That's all right," replied L., pressing his hand cordially; and then in the banker's ear he added, "And I, too, must make a confession—I am a humpback."

SOCIETY.

THE Queen is expected to arrive at Balmoral on Saturday, August 24th, but her Majesty will not leave Osborne until after the Addresses in answer to the Speech from the throne have been presented.

PRINCESS BEATRICE has nearly a thousand photographs scattered about her various rooms, and probably no one has ever counted the other thousands she has stored away. Photographs have been her hobby ever since she was a child.

GREAT preparations are being made at the Kremlin at Moscow in view of the coronation of the present Czar Nicholas II., which, according to a traditional custom, will take place either in the Cathedral Ouspensky or that of the Assumption.

THE Queen does not intend to remain long this summer in the relaxing air of Osborne, proposing to go to Balmoral on August 24th, the keen, bracing air, and restful life of the Highlands will soon counteract the effect of the excessive heat and the pressure of Court and political duties in the south.

THE Princess Philippe of Coburg is as simple and unsophisticated and unaffected as the Archduchess Stephanie is haughty and pretentious, and both of these Belgian Princesses are quite out-of-the-way pretty women. Princess Philippe is the ideal blonde—china blue eyes and very light hair; her skin is divinely fair, and her features fine and regular. Her voice in speaking is most particularly musical and agreeable; indeed, she is noted for this last-named precious and very rare gift.

THE Duke and Duchess of Fife intend to reside for a month at Duff House, Banffshire, before they go to Old Mar Lodge, Aberdeenshire, for the shooting season. Duff, which is the principal family seat of the Duke of Fife, is a stately Italian house, which was built early in the reign of George III., in imitation of the Villa Borghese. It contains a very fine collection of old pictures, including a number of interesting portraits. The park is beautifully wooded, and intersected by the Deveron, and the rocks at Alva Bridge are very pretty. It is near Banff, and within a short distance of the sea.

THE Dowager Empress of Russia, the Princess of Wales and the Princesses Victoria and Maud, and the Duchess of Cumberland, will stay for several weeks at Bernstorff Castle with the King and Queen of Denmark, who do not intend to reside at Fredensborg this year. Bernstorff is a large, comfortable, old-fashioned house, about seven miles from Copenhagen, and within a short distance of the sea. The grounds are very pretty, and there is a well timbered park, while near at hand is the picturesque deer-forest of Klampenborg. The Royal party can make all their favourite excursions from Bernstorff, and it is doubted whether the King and Queen will ever again reside at Fredensborg, as that place has become distasteful to them since the death of the Czar Alexander III., who often said that he had passed the happiest times of his life there.

KING OSCAR OF SWEDEN lately presented the Emperor of Germany with a splendid silver cup which, besides being a beautiful and valuable ornament, has a unique interest of its own, as being an exact copy of one manufactured three hundred and sixty-three years ago. When Gustavus Adolphus entered Nuremberg in 1632, the citizens flocked to welcome him and beg his acceptance of a goblet of solid silver, representing Atlas supporting the globe. This relic is now cherished as a priceless state heirloom, and as the King could not bestow the original on his guest, he commanded that another like it should be made. The commission was carried out with such skill that it would be difficult for any but an expert to decide which is the new and which the old. Both are masterpieces of German Renaissance art, and while one proves the skill possessed by the silversmiths of the past, the other shows the present have not lost their cunning.

STATISTICS.

THE human skeleton contains 200 bones.

LONDON has as an area of 121 square miles.

THERE are eight white men to one white woman in India.

FOUR HUNDRED babies are born daily in London.

THE average age at death among the nobility, gentry, and professional classes is fifty-five years, while among the working classes it rarely exceeds thirty years. This low average age at death is caused by the excessive infantile mortality among the latter class, an authority estimating that 55 per cent. of the children of working men die before they reach five years of age, as against 35 per cent. in the middle class, and 18 per cent. in the upper class. Of accidental deaths, which average 15,000 a year, the greater proportion is also among the working classes.

GEMS.

THERE are qualities which govern men, such as sincerity, which have more to do with influence than the most brilliant flights of fancy and the keenest wit.

It is not yourself only you will serve by the formation of hopeful views and habits; you will be a perpetual cordial and tonic to all among whom your lot is cast.

No man or woman of the humblest sort can really be strong, pure and good without the world being the better for it, without somebody being helped and comforted by the very existence of this goodness.

THE soul always impresses itself upon the body in which it lives. It is the light which shines through the eye in love or hate, in dream or purpose. The thoughts we think and the feeling which fills our hearts become as a part of the blood that courses in our veins.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

EGG SAUCE.—Melt two tablespoonfuls butter, add two tablespoonfuls flour, and pour on slowly one pint of hot water. Add one half teaspoonful salt, one half saltspoonful pepper, two more tablespoonfuls butter, yolks of two eggs beaten slightly, and one teaspoonful lemon juice.

SALMON BOX.—Line a brick mould or bread pan with cooked rice. Fill the centre with cold boiled salmon, flaked and seasoned with salt and pepper and a very little nutmeg. Put a layer of rice on top, and steam one hour. Turn out on a platter, and serve with egg sauce.

BOILED SALAD DRESSING.—Thoroughly beat five eggs, put into them five or six tablespoonfuls of vinegar, two even teaspoonfuls of waste mustard, one teaspoonful each of salt and sugar, half a saltspoonful of red pepper, two tablespoonfuls of oil and a pint of cream. Cook in double boiler till it thickens like soft custard. Stir well. This will keep in a cool place two weeks, and is excellent for lettuce, asparagus, and cauliflower.

LARGE PLAIN DUMPLING.—Three quarter pounds flour, quarter pound suet, quarter pound currants, one tablespoonful sugar, half teaspoonful baking soda, a little spice, one breakfast cup buttermilk; mix all these things together—the milk last, and give it a good stir. Then take a soft cloth (not a bag), dip it in boiling water and dust it with flour and put the mixture in it. Gather up the cloth all round neatly and tie tightly, leaving only a little room for it to swell. Put a plate in the bottom of a pot of boiling water, and boil the dumpling for one and a half or two hours; take it out of the cloth and pour sauce over it. Sauce—one tablespoonful corn flour, one tablespoonful sugar, two breakfastpans milk and water; mix all together and boil.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE tallest tree in the world is the great eucalyptus, in Gipeland, Australia. It is 450 feet high.

IRON has for ages been a favourite medicine. Nearly a hundred different preparations of iron are now known to the chemists.

THERE are insects which pass several years in the preparatory state of existence, and, finally, when perfect, live but a few hours.

LEAVES of the talipot palm in Ceylon sometimes attain the length of 20 feet. The natives sometimes use them in making tents.

THE Queen detests dull people, and any one who keeps her Majesty amused may always count upon being *persona grata* in the Royal circle.

It is certain that the elephant, the rhinoceros, the bear, the hyena, and other wild animals, were at one time common in England. The bones of these animals have been found in Kent's Cavern, about a mile from Torquay.

The green ants of Australia make their nests by bending leaves in the form of a cone, and fastening them with a natural glue. A hundred or more ants will bend the leaf from the top, while the same number remain on the ground, to hold the other side of the leaf there, and receive the top half and secure it in place.

SOME experiments made on the welding of iron bring out a number of points of resemblance between the action of iron and ice. Both expand while passing from the liquid to the plastic state, and both contract in the solid state. Some investigations recently made at the mint prove that wrought iron at a welding temperature possesses the same property of cooling under pressure which exists in freezing water.

It is calculated, as the result of accurate study, that in a strong wind waves may have a length of two hundred and sixty feet, with a speed of about three hundred and sixty feet to a second. Waves four hundred feet long, with a speed of twenty-eight nautical miles per hour, are produced only in heavy storms. Waves may, according to this calculation, rise six hundred feet in fifteen seconds. It is claimed that waves more than sixty feet high are exceptional; that the average is very much less than fifty. In ordinary trade-winds, the height of the waves is from five to six feet.

WHEN a tempest is approaching or passing out on the ocean, the tides are noticeably higher than usual, as if the water had been driven in a vast wave before the storm. The influence extends to a great distance from the cyclonic storm centre, so that the possibility exists of foretelling the approach of a dangerous hurricane by means of indications furnished by tide gauges situated far away from the place then occupied by the whirling winds. The fact that the tidal wave outstrips the advancing storm shows how extremely sensitive the surface of the sea is to the changes of pressure brought to bear upon it by the never resting atmosphere.

It is often the case that amateurs would like to make some use of handsome horns, but from the rigid and obstinate nature of the material are unable to do so. A simple process, carefully followed out, would enable any one to make beautiful and useful articles. The inner part of the horn is scraped out, then it is thrown into water and boiled for an hour or so, when it becomes soft. It is then held in the flame of a wood or coal fire, being constantly turned. It should be kept in the fire for some time, care being taken that it does not burn, and is frequently moistened by being dipped in boiling water. The heat and steam will soften it to about the condition of molten lead. It is, therefore, very soft, and can be split lengthwise by a strong knife and pinners. It can then be cut into thin layers by separating the sheets of which it is composed. By being pressed between dies it can be made to take almost any form. When the article is complete, it can be scraped smooth, then given a high polish.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

C. C.—1896 is a leap year.
ADA.—There is no difference.
S. K.—Until the seals are handed over.
OSBORNE.—Nowhere in the United Kingdom.
A. R.—It would scarcely be considered good.
E. D.—Inquire at the Inland Revenue Office.
ANSWER.—It is against our rule to give addresses.
WILL.—Practically there is no chance for an outsider.
R. G.—It is an ancient manufacture of fine porcelain.
RUDOLPH.—Thirteen cubic feet are estimated as a ton.
DOUBTFUL.—In many cases it would be certain to have that effect.
TAKY.—You had better supply yourself with a book on the subject.
DRAKE.—A bunch of walnut leaves is also said to keep them out of the room.
H. S.—Wash the child's hair with water containing either some borax or a little vinegar.
ANXIOUS.—We cannot undertake to predict how the case would go if taken into court.
QUESTER.—There is no charge whatever for our answers to correspondents.
OLD READER.—There is nothing better or cheaper than those you can buy of any bootmaker.
D. R.—No damages can be obtained from a minor for breach of promise of marriage.
CONVARIANT READER.—When a Tartar invites a man to drink he leads him forward to the table by the ear.
OLAF.—Offer the old Bible and old coins for sale to a dealer in antiquities, or advertise them.
DYSPEPTIC.—Ruts are said to be difficult of digestion unless eaten after a meal with a little salt.
BUTHER.—You can buy in the shops as cheaply as you could make it.
IGNORANT.—Net cash means cash payment, without discount or any other deduction.
PHILIPPA.—Brushing the hair briefly several times a day has been recommended for making it glossy.
DISTRESSED.—The usual course is to advertise, and if the parties can afford it, employ a respectable solicitor.
S. Y.—Consult a lawyer. You will have to employ one before instituting any judicial proceedings.
M. H.—There is no remedy but taking it all to pieces and boiling or baking the stuffing, whatever it may be.
INQUIRE.—Entirely dependent upon the circumstances in which you are placed, and your own disposition.
PURPLED.—The secretary keeps minutes and calls meetings; the treasurer receives, banks, and pays out all moneys.
L.A.—A formal introduction should be insisted upon by you before receiving the attentions of the person referred to.
T. L.—The instruments used on board ships to take observations, as they are called, are the sextant and the quadrant.
AMY.—It may be cleaned by being brushed over with a stout nail brush dipped in a mixture of soapy water and ammonia.
POLLY.—Five well pressed down pintfuls of the heads of flowers of the dandelion are to be used to every gallon of water.
F. N.—Bilious people are advised to sip, not drink, the water they take to allay their thirst, making a glass of water last half an hour.
HOUSEMAID.—A mixture composed of two-thirds water and one-third alcohol is excellent for cleaning the keys of a piano.
CURIOS.—The cheeks become pale from fear because the mental emotion diminishes the action of the heart and lungs and so impedes the circulation.
WORRIED.—If you have unintentionally passed him without speaking pay no heed to it other than to recognize him the next time you meet.
X. Y.—There are two or three totally different compositions used for the purpose, and to remove each of these would require totally different treatment.
SIDNEY.—Washing the face thoroughly with some fine toilet soap and gently rubbing it afterwards with vaseline is thought to be as good as anything.
NEILLS.—Under any circumstances there is no excuse for general untidiness, and the sooner the slave of the habit in question emancipates herself from it the better.
JOE.—Hebe, in mythology, was the goddess of youth. She served her fellow-divinities with nectar at their feasts. She always retained the power of restoring both youth and beauty.
EDMUND.—The Legion of Honour of France was established as a reward for distinguished services in any line, whether military, civil, scientific or literary. It was founded in 1802.

REGULAR READER.—In the British Army twelve years is the longest period a man can be enlisted for; but, after serving that time, and if his character is good, he can be enlisted for another nine years.

ANXIOUS TO KNOW.—There is no special diet to be recommended for brain workers. People who have trouble with their heads usually take too little exercise, and oftentimes too much food. The diet for students should be simple, easily digested and abundant.

O. R.—Take three times as much lime in shell as of pearlsh, slack the lime in water, then add the ash, making the mixture like thick paint; apply to the pety on both sides of glass, let stand overnight, and next morning it will be quite soft.

EMILE.—The peacock's spreading train is not the bird's tail, but a corona of feathers above the tail. The true tail consists of eighteen feathers beneath the corona. The latter is provided with a curious system of muscles by which it can be erected at will.

P. E. G.—*Lettres de cachet* were secret warrants, proceeding from and signed by the Kings of France, and countersigned by a Secretary of State, by which any person could be imprisoned or banished to a certain place without any reason being assigned.

PERSEVERING.—Such ambition is most creditable and worthy of encouragement, but it must be remembered that the literary eminence is a very difficult one to reach, and nothing but continuous effort and untiring diligence are likely to bring satisfactory results.

THE RAINBOW'S CHILD.

Long ago, so the legends say,
 The flowers were out for a festival day
 To give the rainbow greeting;
 There were blossoms of wondrous dye,
 Bright as stars tossed down from the sky,
 In beauty and grace competing.

But one, much fairer than all the rest,
 Was in such exquisite beauty dressed
 That all drew around with wonder;
 Her robes of rich and royal hue,
 Like a mist-veiled sky when the sun peeps through,
 With shell-pink shadings under.

Was frilled with the richest, quaintest lace;
 She held her head with a queenly grace,
 And her jewels' dazzling splendour
 Enrich her robes in "widening way."
 As their scintillant lights all changed play,
 Shining with lustre tender.

Who was the stranger? Why, no one knew
 This debutante fair in robes of blue,
 With gems like a jewel shower.
 Just then, as the rain began to fall,
 Out danced the rainbow; and they all
 Cried out, " 'Tis the rainbow flower!"

For see," they said, "all the rainbow tints,
 With shadings and hues and crystal glints,
 Where the sun through the mist has smiled,
 Are here, repeated in wondrous way;
 Let's call her Iris!" and to this day
 We call her the "Rainbow's Child."

D. F.

ELLEN.—If you are a grown-up young woman, and cannot break off the childish habit of biting the nails without putting something on your fingers, you must have very little will power. Do not be so foolish as to give way to your inclination in such a fashion.

TEDDY.—You must first pass an examination in general knowledge, and then be articulated to a solicitor for five years. An intermediate examination in legal knowledge has to be passed during the term, and afterwards a final examination.

RODIE.—You must decide for yourself whether light tobacco or strong suits your nerves; the outdoor labourer finds solace in thick black; the man who smokes at home over his book or his writing-table finds light Turkish tobacco or bird's-eye the preferable brand.

HUGH.—"The Last Rose of Summer," one of Madame Patti's favourite songs, was the work of Thomas Moore. The melody is a very ancient Irish tune, formerly known as "The Groves of Blarney." This tune has been found in collections of Irish music at least two hundred years old.

INTERESTED.—The gullotine consists of two upright posts surmounted by a cross-beam, and grooved for the purpose of guiding an oblique-edged knife, the back of which is heavily weighted to make it fall swiftly and with force when the cord by which it is held aloft is let go.

MILLY.—You might try at once, after the staining substance has got on them, a little ammonia water, to be then rinsed off with clean water; or a little ammonia water, followed quickly by a little strong solution of hyposulphite of soda. The latter alone will often remove vegetable stains.

ARNOLD.—The name of the Ephesian who set fire to the great Temple of Diana at Ephesus was Erostratus. When asked why he had committed such an act he replied, "To make my name immortal." The Ephesians passed a decree consigning his name to oblivion, but it was of no avail. The destruction of the temple took place on the night in which Alexander the Great was born.

GRATE.—Do not allow soap to touch it or it will fix the stain into a dye. Spread the stained portions as soon as possible over a basin, and keep pouring soft boiling water through them. This is the best way to carry off the stain; but should it obstinately remain rub in a little powdered borax and pour on more boiling water to run through in a basin, and persist till the stain is dislodged, then place the linen to soak in the usual way.

BAR.—Boak in equal proportions of wine and water, sweetened with loaf sugar, some slices of sponge cake. Put them in a glass bowl. Make a custard in the proportion of eight eggs to a quart of milk and six ounces of sugar. When cold lay the custard over the sponge cake; beat the whites of three eggs to a froth; add, by degrees, three tablespoonfuls of powdered loaf sugar, flavour with lemon or vanilla, and with a spoon lay it tastefully over the top.

RAVENOUS READER.—The loss of the *Royal George* is not a fiction by Captain Marryat, but an historical fact, and forms the subject of a well-known poem; the vessel was a frigate, not a gunboat as you suggest, and sank off Spithead on 29th July, 1783, when being heeled in order that a pipe in the bottom of the ship might be repaired; a sudden gust of wind expired her; in all about six hundred persons were drowned, including Admiral Kempenfelt, who was in command; the vessel was lifted about sixty years later.

C. A.—Many of our surnames are derived from the handicraft originally practised by their ancestors—as Smith, Taylor, &c. To be distinguished from his father, the son of John the Smith, or John Smith, called himself John Smithson; thus another class arose. Then, again, the characteristic feature of a man was taken, as Whitehead; or the town where he lived, as Arundel. Then again, the members of clans, as Campbell. These are some of the leading sources whence our category of names has arisen.

A LOVER OF THE "LONDON READER."—Use first a solution of permanganate of potash in water. The strength of the solution may be determined by its becoming of a wine colour. Let the sponge be thoroughly saturated and remain in the solution for some time. Then take it out and when squeezed put it into a solution of ordinary commercial muriatic acid, using one part of the acid to ten parts of water. Let it become well saturated and soaked through and through in this, then squeezed free of the acid and washed well in three or four changes of clean water.

W. P.—One pint of spirits of wine, one ounce of gum copal, quarter ounce of gum arabic, and one ounce of shelling. Bruise the gum, and sift it through a piece of muslin. Place the spirits and the gum together in a vessel closely corked, place them near a warm stove, and frequently shake them; in two or three days they will be dissolved. Strain through a piece of muslin and keep it corked tight. To apply the polish fold a piece of dannel into a sort of cushion, wet it well with the polish, then lay a piece of clean linen rag over the dannel, apply one drop of linseed oil; rub your work in a circular direction, lightly at first. To finish off use a little naphtha applied the same as the polish.

EDITH.—In gathering them, it is said that only moist and fresh pieces should be selected, and that they should be first soaked in a basin of fresh water to clean them from sand and salt. Then choose a good piece, lay it in a soap-plate filled with fresh water, and slip it under a sheet of white paper. While in the water the sea-weed may be easily spread out evenly on the paper by means of a camel's hair pencil or brush. When this has been done the paper may be raised gently from the water, and the seaweed will keep its form. Let the water drain off and then lay the paper on a piece of blotting paper; over the seaweed lay a piece of linen cloth, and over that another piece of blotting paper. The linen cloth is put in to keep the blotting paper from sticking to the seaweed. After arranging all the pieces of seaweed in this way pile them up between two boards and put some weight on them, and leave them for three or four days to dry. When dry, take off the blotting-paper and rag from each carefully, so as not to pull up the seaweed. It should be stated to amateurs that while most seaweeds are gummy and stick to the paper some hard ones need a little mullage. When well dried the papers may be neatly arranged according to their sizes on the pages of an album. If the specimens are large, only one can be put on a page, but if they are small they may be placed in many attractive ways. A little mullage under the corner of each paper will hold them securely.

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